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# FALSE DAWN

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## PREFACE.

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HE who writes on politics incurs two risks. If his work deals with general principles, he is accused of pedantry. If it deals with current questions, he is accused of propaganda. In the first case his book is censured as tedious, in the second as tendencious. It is not yet well established whether it is better to be reputed a bore or a liar. The first reproach may be in some way avoided by conciseness, the second by candour. The vast subject of Revolution can hardly be treated concisely, and must therefore for the present await its historian. The present tract is confined to one part of that subject only, to an inquiry—that is, as to what are the causes which render a society susceptible to revolutionary ideas? I had no intention to refer to any actual political question, fearing the reproach of tendenciousness, but the coal question was too apposite

an example to be pretermitted. I have not thought it necessary to discuss the adjective doctrines of Communism, which are, moreover, hardly yet settled. These are mere matters of mechanism. It is the idea, which these attempt to embody, which is of importance.

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I.

# AN APOLOGY





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I.

AN APOLOGY.

It used to be the practice, and for all I know still is, for the Indian Government to publish periodically a mighty tome dealing with the moral and material progress of the Indian Empire during a given number of years. Malignant critics used to murmur that the progress reported was neither very moral nor very material, and the work itself was hardly to be numbered among the best sellers, but the practice had its merits. It is indubitably advisable that, at certain conjunctures, those to whom the State is a living being should pause and look round them and try to ascertain exactly where the community stands, and whither that political entity of which they are atoms is progressing. There have been five crises in the history of man, when, had there been such an observer, and had he recorded the results of his reflections, posterity might have profited. Possibly the benefit derived would merely have

been that it had occasion for a good laugh at the folly of political vaticination, but a good laugh is by no means to be despised.

As I understand History, at any rate the history of Western Europe, the protagonists thereof are not men but Ideas. Mankind in general is not friendly to new ideas, and over a great part of the habitable globe a new idea has only to appear for it to be extinguished by the unanimous efforts of all concerned. But this is not always the case in the West. Again and again the operative spirit has worked in a chaos, or in a cosmos now sinking to dissolution, and a new cosmos has come to birth. It was the duty of those competent for the task, who were present at the travail of the social system of their day, to record their views as to what were the chances of the new creature's coming to birth, of its survival, and of the destinies of the world under its predominance. But such writings are rare. Indeed, what strikes the political student is the almost total failure of the wise and learned of old times to appreciate the significance of what was passing around them. There were doubtless many intelligent observers of such events, but few have left behind them any memorial.

The Idea of the Great State came into Europe

in the fourth century before Christ. It aroused passionate hostility, and men fought against it manfully both with pen and with sword. But no one stopped to ascertain why the city-state was obsolete, what was the moral idea which lay behind the Macedonian triumphs, and what were the prospects of civilisation under monarchy. "That old man eloquent," Isocrates, might have done this work—he was detached enough from the actual struggle—but he was too busy in blowing iridescent soap-bubbles, and in clamouring for a kind master, to attempt a task which could not reasonably be imposed on Demosthenes. The advent of Christianity was as the coming of a thief in the night; but when it was manifest that it had indeed come, not one writer, whether Pagan, Christian, or scoffer, attempted to ascertain why it had come, what would become of it, and how it would operate in that Golgotha of dead things, its environment. None, not even Erasmus, appreciated in the least the meaning of that thing which is called the Reformation. The fourth great Idea, that of Liberalism, was certainly observed in its formidable infancy, and by an observer of no common order. But the benignant fates did not concede to the author of the 'Reflections' the completion of the 'Letters on a Regicide

Peace.' The idea of Nationality has not yet found even its competent biographer.

The reason, I take it, is that the traveller cannot see the wood for the trees. In the stages preceding the revolution, writers are either busy politicians, anxious chiefly how the next division, or at best the next election, will go, who cannot be expected to detach themselves from their immediate surroundings, or closet politicians not very well versed in affairs, or journalists, inclined perhaps to attribute too much importance to the questions of the moment as news items. In time of actual revolution the Porch and the Academy are closed. The shadow of the hemlock is not as conducive to calm speculation as the shadow of the plane-tree of the Ilissus. A system produced in the intervals of dodging the police must necessarily lack coherence. Thus when the soldier is running full manfully to the rear, squealing for quarter, with the breath of the pursuer hot on his neck, he cannot be expected to think out a well-planned scheme of orderly retreat for the whole army.

Since then, for these or other reasons, those great thinkers who could do the work may not, it is perhaps permissible for intelligences far humbler to undertake some portion of the task. For this service an exile is not perhaps wholly

disqualified. The world, it is true, is not very kind to exiles. Ægisthus said that they fed upon empty hopes, a somewhat windy diet. Enlightened public opinion in antiquity leaned towards the view that the best thing to do with an exile was to kill him. Then he could not return, and thus the State escaped the grave danger pointed out by the anonymous libeller of Tiberius. We all know what the opinion of Dante was about exiles. It is true that he is complaining of the personal discomforts of the status, but it is none the less true that, after some years at the court of Can Grande, he would have found himself somewhat unsuited to a municipal career in Florence. Beranger has drawn a painful picture of the restored exile, and probably those viscounts and marquises who perished by the democratic sword, the malaria of the West Indies, and by consumption of the bread flavoured with salt, were happier than those who shared the compensatory milliard. The disadvantage of the exile still persists. He is, moreover, in general, too busy in his pursuit of those ferocious and evasive animals, the rupee and the dollar and the tael, to study the questions agitated in his home lands. But if he has the will, he has the power. Thucydides could not read the 'Daily Mail.' Clarendon

knew nothing of those weeklies, quarterlies, or annuals which render our mail-days so festive. We are thus not, like the exiles of old, entirely dependent for our information on the biased reports of political sympathisers who have found it possible to remain within the four seas, and this may somewhat compensate for our inferiority in intellect. The exile is indeed somewhat in the position of the writer who writes after the event, for the latter also must derive his impressions not from what he has himself seen and heard but from what he has read. There is, moreover, this advantage, that faulty observation by a contemporary can be put right more easily than the faulty deduction of a historian, and his ignorance enlightened. It is for this reason that I feel it is not wholly impertinent to put on record my views on Communism. The exile is in some ways detached from the actual conflict. He has reached, panting but unscathed, some city of refuge, and from those secure battlements may look with a critical and dispassionate eye on the struggle still in progress in the open field. Should his Ziklag become in its turn an object of contention to the opposing forces, he has had at least conceded to him a time of respite and a breathing-space. Thus he may ponder what is the force which now menaces his security,

of what is it composed, and how commanded? By what privy sap or by what open breach may it come within the walls? What chances are there of relief, of capitulation, and of sack? Above all, what is the character of the garrison, and what of the commander? The most virginal Péronne must fall if the defenders be not in good heart. Courage will make good the most defenceless Arrah.

This city of mine is now menaced by the sixth great Idea let loose upon Western Europe. This Idea is that of Communism. This Idea has now developed from the embryonic stage to that of separate and authentic vitality. It has passed that great preliminary test. It has found a sword. Men will kill and be killed, not for temporal advantages to be derived from the triumph of the Idea but for the Idea itself. Therefore it lives, and therefore it is worthy of study.





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II.

THE IDEA

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## II.

### THE IDEA.

THE oracles of Communism, like the oracles of the Sibyll, are for the most part vulgated by inscription on deciduous leaves. True, there are ponderous tomes enough dealing with the fundamental economic doctrines of the new faith, but these are not suited to the general reader. There was also, till recently, a tendency to keep some of the articles of the faith as arcana, the apostles believing that such might not be altogether palatable to prospective proselytes. The new sect has therefore a literature copious, and of very varying degrees of orthodoxy and attractiveness (Marx may be put at one pole and Jack London at the other), but it has not yet found its Melancthon, far less its Calvin.

It is possible, however, to deduce the system from its two main axioms or propositions: first, that labour, and labour only, produces value; and secondly, that both justice and expedience

require that those only who have produced should enjoy the product. If these propositions be not accepted, the whole system fails. If they are admitted, they carry with them certain obvious consequences. Admitting then the truth of these doctrines, it is not difficult to elaborate a complete scheme of economic and social reconstruction.

I proceed to expound this system. I have done my best to avoid misrepresentation and undue stressing of such parts of the system as may appear offensive. Nothing of that kind is inserted *in odium* or for the purpose of propaganda. As far as in me lies I have treated the question as one of mathematics, and feel no more attraction to or repulsion from the theory than the student feels in respect of the logarithmic curve as he follows its progress to, through, and from infinity. The communistic theory then is something of this kind:

The members of a community must be fed, clothed, sheltered, and provided with the necessities of life. They have also natural instincts which (so long as the interests of the community do not suffer) are entitled to a reasonable gratification. In order that these ends may be fulfilled there must be the creation and distribution of commodities.

Commodities are produced by the applica-

tion of labour to raw materials. Labour does not, as some of the weaker brethren think, mean the labour of the manual toiler (whether skilled artisan or unskilled journeyman) only, but includes also the expenditure of energy by the inventor and scientist, as well as by the organiser and director. It is this application of labour to raw materials that creates values. In themselves raw materials have no actual but merely potential values. It is arguable that all commodities to which an equal amount of labour of the same kind has been applied have the same value, but this is not an article of the faith. But in any case it is labour, and labour alone, which creates commodities.

It would appear, then, that according to strict justice those only who produce should consume. Raw materials are the gift of nature, and no one has the right to claim anything from the community owing to his having abstracted from the general stock any such communal property. On the contrary, instant restitution is obligatory. It is unjust that any man should force another, either by the threat of the whip or the threat of starvation, to work for the benefit of one who produces nothing. Still it may well be conceded that certain persons who do not produce anything have a claim on the community. There are,

for instance, children too young to work, or meritorious persons now stricken in years ; there may also be persons engaged in the defence or adornment of the community, in exploring the secrets of science, and in increasing the domination of man over nature, who may well claim their share in the products of the community, though they are not at the moment positively producing anything.

But it is for the community to say how products are to be divided. To the community belong as of right all raw materials. The community can apply the labour of its members also to creating from those raw materials the commodities it needs. There being thus no source of supply of commodities except from the domain of the community, that community is absolutely master of distribution, and it may in strict justice, according to its own sense of what is right and expedient, assign to every individual member what it considers the due share of each member.

Up to the present the community has found it on the whole expedient to permit to private enterprise the production and distribution of commodities. But private property is really an anachronism. It is based on violence, and maintained by violence and fraud. Particularly liable to this censure are the kinds of

property known as capital and rent. Rent is the blackmail levied on his brethren by the cunning and unscrupulous man who has succeeded in reducing to private possession some valuable part of the public domain. He, while producing nothing himself, uses his advantage to extort from those who can use it for the purpose of production a share of the commodities produced. Interest or dividend (the rent of capital) is also blackmail. Capital comes into existence by reason of the fact that some individual at some time has engrossed to himself more than his fair share of commodities, and has thus left on his hands after satisfaction of his needs a certain balance. There being a temporary shortage of such commodities, this cunning and provident man allows the community, or the individual, the use of that fraudulently obtained and selfishly hoarded wealth, extorting in exchange from the distress of his brethren more than his fair share of the annual dividend. Under a communistic régime there would, of course, be neither rent nor interest. There would be no one to pay and no one to receive. The community would itself make use of its own domain, removing the monopolist. The dividend among the members of the community would be according to the current needs of each individual, neither



less nor more. Thus there would be for the individual no possibility of saving, and hence no capital. Nor would it be necessary for the private individual to borrow; his needs would be met from the resources of the State as such needs arose. Nor would it be necessary for the community to borrow. It could take as long as there was anything to take, but in any case its resources, and hence its reserves, would be so ample that it could well afford to maintain its members in the intervals of production, or during those stages of a new undertaking when products are not equal to the consumption. Thus these two great evils of interest and rent would be eliminated. It is needless to say that the most deleterious form of interest is the interest paid on the loans made to Government. The holder of debentures or shares in some industrial concern has at least the excuse of believing that his selfishness has enabled commodities to be produced or distributed which would otherwise have never been made available for the use of mankind, but the recipient of interest on Government loans or from the Savings Banks is merely battenning on the crimes and follies of the past. But in truth it is not necessary to draw any distinction between felony and felony, or to assess the comparative guilt of Turpin and Duval.

A thief is a thief, and that is all about it. The community, therefore, is entitled to take possession of that part of the domain which has been usurped. This is not confiscation but resumption. It is the right and duty of the community, therefore, to arrange for the production and distribution of commodities. It is true that it might not be possible immediately for the community to fulfil those functions. There is, indeed, a schism among the brethren on this point. It is possible that it might be expedient to allow for a time private enterprise to continue. It is, however, certain that this will be a transitional stage only, and that even during that transitional stage private enterprise will be tolerated rather than encouraged. It will work in strict subordination to the will of the community, and as large a share as possible of the commodities it produces will be applied to the needs of the community. Eventually the community will possess all things. The change will come violently by the insurrection of the oppressed manual toiler, or gradually and almost imperceptibly by reason of the growth of the social sense in man. But come it will sooner or later; then the community will possess all things. It will require from all its members sacrifice, voluntary or compelled, and a total subordination of

private to public interests. It is not merely a question of stripping a few of their ill-gotten wealth, but everything will be taken from each man for the common benefit. The artisan has no more right to his tools or the sempstress to her sewing-machine than the king to his crown or the usurer to his hoard. It is just as much an offence against the rights of the community to retain for your own benefit three acres and a cow as it is for His Grace to hold all those leagues of cornfield and pasture, so many wealthy cities, such rich mines.

Further, it is not merely the sacrifice of property which is required but the sacrifice of the individuality. The community has the right to call on every man and woman to take that post, and to fulfil those functions which it deems fitting.

It is clear that the community has the right to dispose of the labour of its members, and so to do its duty. The duty of the community is to provide the individual member with commodities, and commodities are produced by the application of labour to raw materials. That the community has the right to resume its dominion over raw materials is clear. It follows, therefore, that the community has the right to compel its members so to apply their energies that the raw materials may be

turned into commodities. The healthy adult who can work and will not, the skilled labourer who, in consideration of a high wage, devotes his energies to making useless or noxious products, the man of ability who, content with a competence, dreams away his days in his study, or wastes the vigorous hours in trying to bring down his golf handicap, is just as much a monopolist, just as much a squanderer of the resources of the community, as the man who extorts from the residents in his slum tenements their miserable shillings to add to his private resources, or the landholder who keeps closed some profitable mine for fear of spoiling the view from his drawing-room windows. The community has therefore the right to compel its own members to surrender not only the visible and tangible resources that they have usurped, but also those invisible resources, the power, that is, and the ability to labour which are now monopolised by their possessors, and too often scandalously dissipated.

Nor in so vital a matter for the community as the production and nurture of future citizens will the community tolerate obstruction due to the personal whims of members. A woman, suitable for the purpose, has no more right to refuse the burden of maternity than the squire has to shut up some agreeable and convenient

footpath. We must get away from that word "love," which connotes so much mere egoism and brutality. It is not to such a passion that we can confide the destinies of humanity. Marriage and the family, those fortalices of egoism, must be abolished, and a wise and scientific system of eugenics be applied to the purpose of securing the continuity of the community. It is possible that it may be found that it is for the good of the community to encourage or permit the formation of quasi-monogamous unions, lasting perhaps in some cases for some years. It is possible that on the whole it may be found expedient that children (at any rate for the first few years of their life) should, under strict supervision, be left to the care of their mother (and father if he be known), but that is a matter on which experience will throw a further light. It is at least certain that no natural rights (whatever these may be) can be pleaded against expedience. It will be necessary at first to prohibit the open expression, either by the spoken word or in the form of art, of ideas subversive of the community, and therefore dangerous to the members of the community. It is clear that the community must take on itself the duty of forming and guiding public opinion, and it certainly cannot tolerate the open manifestation of dis-

agreement or even opposition lurking in the mind of any individual. For this reason the community will not admit the claims of religion to dictate conduct. The only God is Man. The only Church, the community. The only sin, disobedience.

In return for all this sacrifice the community will guarantee to such of its members as it finds meritorious the necessities of existence, and by necessities is meant not merely a starving maintenance but as many of the agreeables of life as the community is able to provide, or as it deems suitable. The resources of the community are, however, not boundless, and a certain check on over-population may be necessary. Old and useless people may be eliminated by some painless and indeed agreeable process of euthanasia. Such a process would certainly be applied, after consulting competent medical opinion, to the degenerates, the mentally feeble, the tainted in body and soul. And it is probable that the standard by which was measured the amount of competence which entitles a unit to live would be eventually high. With this and a scientific system of birth-control the danger of population pressing on the means of subsistence can easily be avoided. It is, as a matter of fact, found that in states of society similar to

the ideal communistic state there is not a great desire to be born.

Still it is recognised that however limited the population may be or become, it is after all on the willingness of the people to labour that depends an adequate supply of commodities, and by labour is not meant manual toil only, but labour also of the brain. It is hoped that in time man will develop a stronger sense of altruism, so that he will labour to the full of his powers, or rather to the full extent of the demands of the community, for sheer love of his race. But if that be not so, or till man so develops his moral nature, the community will have in its hands those powers of coercion that the private employer now has. It can menace the defaulter with starvation, and it being the only employer will be in a position to enforce its threats. In cases of great obstinacy or of concerted mutiny, such as a strike, the community will be in possession of those ultimate sanctions of corporal punishment and the infliction of death which all Governments possess.

The Government of the community will be omnipotent, for only thus can it perform its duties. The form of Government is not yet devised. There is much dispute as to the organisation of the authorities responsible for the superintendence of production and dis-

tribution. But taking it as provisionally convenient that the community should be identical with the local state, we may say with assurance that in the communistic state there is no place for the semi-feudal monarchy with its sinister memories of oppression and selfishness. Still less will there be any place for representative Government, whether based on universal or restricted suffrage. That form of Government has always been the chosen organ of the capitalist and monopolist, and it is chiefly valuable because it allows discrepant and particularist interests to come to a compromise by mutual arrangement, so that the conflict between such rival interests does not jeopardise the State. But under the communistic régime there will be no private or particularist interests, because the interest of the community and the interests of each member thereof will be identical. Thus there can be no disputes either among the members *inter se* or between the State and any private citizen. Those to whom are assigned the vital functions of direction must be in some way above and apart from the mass of the population. Thus only can it be that they may have that homogeneity, that impartiality, that broadness of vision always desirable in the ruler, but here absolutely indispensable. There will be



a central directorate selected perhaps by some method of co-optation ; there will be local or provincial directorates selected in the same way and working in subordination to the central executive. Both the central and local directorates will have their own staff of agents and experts, appointed by themselves. None of these rulers will receive anything more than the share in commodities which would be his in any case. To every man according to his needs, and the great surgeon, the great poet, or the great inventor does not need any more than the man who sweeps the streets or cleans the drains. Men will serve the State loyally, and not as mercenaries, in the post assigned to them, and will find their reward not in filching from the general stock commodities which should be applied to the maintenance of thousands of their brethren, but in the gratification that a man feels when he has done that which he is best fitted to do—that is, when his peculiar abilities have been given full scope, and he has thus been able to benefit the community. It is not for pecuniary reward that the soldier goes over the top. It is not for pecuniary reward that the athlete undergoes the disagreeables of training and the severe labour of the race.

It is indubitable that high qualities will be required both in the directors and the agents,

but we have full belief in humanity, and we believe that the occasion calls forth the man. It is unthinkable that the governing body of a community should degenerate into a close body of oligarchs supported by mercenary troops, and by means of a powerful and corrupt bureaucracy tyrannising over a servile population, and extorting from its blood and sweat wealth to be lavished in the sinful luxury familiar to the capitalist state.

It is averred that the history of the man in the past clearly indicates the coming triumph of the communist idea. Man, at first isolated family by family, cared only for himself and for his own. In the destruction of his neighbour he saw merely the destruction of a possible foe and a certain competitor. Thereafter families gathered into tribes, and then into cities, at each of which stages man learned that by yielding somewhat to the claims of others he better secured his own existence. Next came the idea of the Great State, and man was now not struggling daily, community with rival community, for mere existence. Functions became more differentiated, and man learned to specialise. Thus he ever became more and more dependent on his neighbour and fellow-citizen. Then came Christianity, which taught the brotherhood of man. The Reformation

followed, which was ultimately to destroy religious sanctions and to make the State supreme. Then came Liberalism, which was to level all orders in the State and destroy all power in any citizen to resist the commands of the State. One privilege, and one privilege alone, it left intact, and that was the privilege of wealth. That privilege, in itself the most odious of privileges, now isolated, could hardly plead at the bar of reason that its exemption from destruction was justifiable on moral grounds. Its survival was a question of expedience, and it has been judged that it is not expedient that it should continue. The idea of nationalism will in time contribute to the growth of the new idea. Nationalism, by eliminating from the bounds of the community all alien and possibly hostile elements, must necessarily make the population more homogeneous, and thus more inclined to follow a common policy. Thus it would appear that Communism is the ultimate goal of man, and that there is no passing beyond it. To it history leads, and with its establishment history ends. The annals of the future will not be disfigured by a record of the crimes and follies of man. They will record a continual process of triumph over nature, continual expansion of human knowledge, and continual increase of human felicity.

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### III.

## LIMITATIONS

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### III.

#### LIMITATIONS.

SUCH is the genuine doctrine of the Communist. Marx, the evangelist, supposed that capital would, in process of time, become concentrated in ever fewer hands, and that distribution and production would become ever more and more mechanical, and thus more and more a matter of routine. The importance of the worker, on the other hand, would remain constant. Eventually, therefore, it would be easy for the State to eliminate the capitalist (whose functions would by that time have become obsolete), and to deal direct with the worker.

This is Collectivism. It is not looked on with much favour by the modern Communist, because of his fear that the external State control necessary to the working of the system might reintroduce the evils of capitalism in another form. But as some form of external control would be necessary in the case of Syndicalism or Guild Socialism, it is simpler

and more candid to consider the collectivist theory as orthodox.

Similarly, in dealing with Christianity, I should consider him as a Christian who believed in the divinity of Christ and the operative effect of the sacraments, and should not criticise the rival theories of the Arian or Nicene, of the Papist, Orthodox or Lutheran, of the Calvinist, the Episcopalian or Baptist. It was not for these sects, but for the idea that lies behind the sects, that the protomartyrs died. In dealing then with Communism one may omit the jangling sects, the doctrines of some of which might be represented in a very odious form, and regard him as a Communist who avers that labour creates values, and that justice and expedience require that he and he only who produces should consume. Of that doctrine Collectivism is the most favourable example.

The truth of this doctrine is not generally accepted. This is perhaps not a matter for surprise. Many of the objections taken are, however, futile enough. It is said, for instance, that the theory is not new. That is true. Clever men, anxious to show their cleverness, have from the beginning of philosophy toyed with these theories, and it was, as a matter of fact, no very long step from the Greek polis

to the phalanx of Fourier. There have been sporadic attempts to realise the idea at various times through the ages, which attempts have for the most part been unsuccessful. Up to the present the only Communistic systems which have long continued in practice were the domination of the Incas in Peru and the rule of the Jesuits in Paraguay. In respect of neither have we much information. In both cases a superior race—a race, moreover, which was protected by the power of superstition—dominated over a docile and industrious but inferior population, and utilised its power in the first place for its own benefit, and in the second for the benefit of its subjects. These instances therefore must be rejected, because it was not the community itself that produced and distributed commodities but an alien and parasitic organisation. It may therefore be truly said that Communism has not succeeded in practice; but this by no means proves that it is not true, or even that it is not workable. The mystics tell us that theophany succeeds to theophany. When the divine exponent of the Idea is withdrawn, darkness begins to come on the world. This darkness is not wholly dark, for the after-shine of the sun is still visible in the heavens. This partial obscuration is, however, succeeded by the utter



darkness of the major occultation. This is the black night of error. After the allotted time comes the first false dawn, and then the greyness of the morning sky, to be followed in inevitable sequence by the splendours of the new theophany. To put this teaching in a form less unfamiliar to the general public, a new idea rarely bursts on the world unheralded. Christianity had its Baptist and even its Mithras and Eleusis. Luther had his Huss. The origins of Liberalism are to be found much farther back in history than 1789. It is no sound objection to the truth or to the validity of an idea that something like it has appeared before and has proved false or incapable of life. Harvest is not in January.

Others who oppose the theory point as proof of its falsity to the excesses of certain Communists. This is mere propaganda. No great idea establishes itself without the slaying of men. It comes not to bring peace but a sword. The truth of the Reformation is not to be judged by the performances of the Anabaptists of Munster. The truth of Liberalism is not to be judged by the days of the Terror.

Revolution in ideas is apt to bring also a revolution in the State. The prize—and such a glittering prize—is within the grasp of him who dares to seize it. It is not a subject for

marvel that those who have the courage and energy to attain and retain sovereignty should regard themselves as absolved from the commands of a moral law which is in general applicable only in times of settled Government. Nor is it a subject of marvel that races, classes, or individuals, long oppressed by the system now destroyed, should take their revenge when they have the opportunity, and should regard it as their highest duty to prevent the resurgence of the defeated idea. Nor is it strange that men long excluded from power, long oppressed, now holding the complete sovereignty, and having therefore the power to oppress in turn, haunted also perpetually by the fear that their domination may fall, and that not their lives only but the lives of all their adherents may be forfeited, should in their terror and power commit crimes shocking to the placid resident of Brixton. The establishment of most of the Great Ideas has therefore been attended with a reasonable amount of confiscation, spoliation, rapine, ravishment, bloodshed, and torture. It is unfortunate that men should be killed, but in any case they are not immortal, and nowhere does grass grow so rapidly as over the graves of the dead. To suppose therefore that the proceedings of the Soviets in Russia and Hungary form a con-

clusive refutation of the truth of Communism is incorrect.

To attribute the movement to an anti-Christian conspiracy is also mere propaganda, and propaganda of no very convincing a description. The movement may be considered as having two aspects, the subversive and the constructional. To say that you cannot be subversive without wishing to subvert is a mere platitude. Therefore Communism, if it is to succeed, must certainly sweep away a great deal, and if among other things doomed to perish opinions and institutions which press with particular severity on certain races perish also, it is unreasonable to expect that members of those races will not hail with joy the moment of liberation, and that they will not support a movement which promises them security and equality. For this reason that particular and heretical kind of Communism known as Bolshevism, which aims at a subversion which is immediate, and must therefore be revolutionary, has certainly found in Eastern Europe many disciples in the oppressed Jewish race, but that does not mean that Bolshevism or even subversive Communism has any necessary connection with Judaism. Subversive Communism has many adherents in India and China also, but no one in his senses would suppose that

Bolshevism was in any way connected with Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism. People in extremity must fight with what weapons are handiest. If there is any religion behind subversive Communism it is not that of Judaism. It is that debased Manicheanism that bows itself in the temple of Baran Satanas. But that creed is not a racial creed. Those altars stand wherever the oppressed begin to think. It is the creed of the scorned and injured intellectual.

On its constructional side Communism has owed much to members of the Jewish race, but more to pioneers who were not of that faith, and to me there seems little in the positive doctrines of the sect to attract the Jew.

Leaving such objections as irrelevant, it is certainly true that the burden of proof is on the Communist. He asserts that Man would be capable of living in the Communistic Manoa, and that he would be happier there. That may well be, but the Communist has no data from which to prove that thesis inductively; he is thus forced to prove it deductively from his first principles. Yet his two fundamental propositions are propositions, and not axioms. The statement that labour, and labour only, creates values is, I believe, disputed by the economists, who point out a certain confusion

in the use of the word "value." The statements that justice and expedience require that those only who have produced should enjoy may very well be true, but it is possible to prove neither deductively. One is a proposition of morals, and is therefore not capable of proof by any process of logic. The other could be proved completely only by experience. We have no materials from experience to enable us to test the truth or falsehood of the assertion. It is unreasonable therefore to expect the public to assent to the truth of these conclusions in the same way as a student assents to the demonstration of a theorem in geometry. Assent, if given at all, must be given, as it is given to the Nicene Creed or the Epipsychidion, as an act of faith, and that state of assent must therefore be reached otherwise than by pure reason. In fact the truth of this creed seems to depend very much on the truth of the doctrine of the perfectibility of man—a doctrine which is, to say the least, extremely dubious. Those, therefore, who are not convinced by the apostles of the new faith are not necessarily the pot-bellied lechers dear to the designers of subversive cartoons, but may be merely men whose intellect is stronger than their emotions. As a comfort, however, to the Communistic St Paul, it may be admitted that the number

of such men is not great, and that their influence in quiet times is not large.

I think that the wise will admit that Communism will come, if at all, as an evolutionary process. It will come, that is, when man is fitted for it, not when he wants it. In that case, to trouble about the abstract truth or falseness of the doctrine is waste of time. Let it be admitted that there is much that is erroneous in the doctrine as stated. That will not prevent the idea from operating with effect. What dominant idea was ever wholly true? What wholly true idea would have any chance of propagating itself in this world of men? If an idea is to operate with creative power, it must contain in itself truth and error, god-head and manhood, mixed indivisibly and yet distinctly. In what ratio the proportion of truth and error is mixed, in that ratio will the idea be capable of perfect realisation. But as no system of unmixed error could obtain the assent necessary for its existence even for a moment, so the revelation of the perfect truth would mean the end of all things. The fact therefore that an idea contains error is no proof that it will not work, and work very mightily. You may hear very conclusive refutations of Christianity at the street corner on any Sunday afternoon, but the idea is still

vital. You may disprove Communism to your heart's content. You may demonstrate to your own satisfaction that it will never work in practice, but that will not prevent people believing in it, and as long as people believe in it it will be true.

There is thus no danger to civilisation from the coming of Communism. It is from its not coming that the danger will arise. Evolution is a slow business, and it will take many generations before man is evolved into a creature of the kind capable of living in a Communistic State. If evolution is not proceeding in that direction, then Communism will not prevail. If evolution is proceeding in that direction, then Communism will come whether we like it or not.

To some, nay, to most, the prospect of any change is disagreeable. Probably the cave-man would have thought it deplorable that man should leave his nice airy caves and congregate in stuffy cities. It is probable also that the tadpole prefers gills to the prospect of lungs. But he is not consulted. Nor will man be consulted. Man can do little if anything to change the course of evolution, which is directed by the conjuncture of many and obscure powers. Thus, though we may not like the idea of the Communistic Manoa, it is

possible our remote descendants will. In any case it is hardly necessary to trouble about our remote descendants, who show little or no sign of troubling about us.

The danger, therefore, that now confronts us is not the coming of Communism but the not coming of Communism. Communism promises a remedy of the ills from which certain sections of humanity are indubitably suffering. If this promise is not fulfilled, there will be the discontent of large masses who feel themselves defrauded of their legitimate hopes. At the same time, there are now, as in all ages, impatient idealists desirous to realise here and now those promises of a paradise which awaits man, if at all, only in the remote future. It is the conjunction of impatient idealism with actual, grievous, and unredressed suffering that begets revolutions. If the moment selected for the attempt to redress grievances by force is not the appropriate moment, then follows much useless suffering, and sometimes the eversion of the State.

It may also happen that though the State survives such an abortive attempt at forcible revolution, yet its vitality is in the struggle so affected that the meliorative powers of evolution are wholly checked, and the survival is merely in a mechanical and not an organic



form. This—namely, the eversion of the State or its permanent crippling—is more likely to happen in a highly organised State than in one of low organisation (as the starfish will survive injuries that would be fatal to a man); but it is precisely in a highly organised State that the evils against which Communism protests are most patent, and where its subversive doctrines are most likely to obtain an audience. In short, I can well imagine a citizen of modern England who did not accept Communism as a whole, but had picked out merely those parts of the system which appealed to him and to his fellows, and who found that it was after all impossible to have the privileges without the disadvantages, might well lose patience, and concentrate rather on the subversive than on the constructional doctrines. It is this impatience which has led to Bolshevism. The Bolshevik is merely a Communist who thinks that social development, both economical and moral, has now reached such a point that it would be possible for the community to take over the administration of industry immediately. That is to say, the sincere leaders of that party thought that evolution had led us much further than was actually the case. They were drawn into this error because to them personally the existing social

system was absolutely intolerable, and they therefore believed that to be true which they wished to be true. When the supreme power did come into their hands they found that the State was not so highly organised as to be capable of efficiently performing its duty of producing and distributing commodities, and they found also that the individual members of the community were by no means so altruistic that they were prepared to make the necessary sacrifices. Thus it became necessary to coerce. In Hungary the rulers found it impossible at once to coerce the citizen and to keep at bay the foreign foe, and the régime collapsed. In Russia, as far as can be judged by our very meagre information, the Communists are rapidly ceasing to be Communists, retaining only so much of the creed as justifies them in preserving an usurped power, and as may be useful as a means of attaining Imperialistic ends in foreign policy. This, it seems to me, is the real danger of Communism—impatient idealism. The city of heaven is taken by violence even to this day, but the crystalline battlements must suffer in the process, and the storming party is not always successful.

In England there are many impatient idealists and much suffering. Moreover, society is organised in a manner far more unnatural than was

in the case in Russia. Thus there is *a priori* no great improbability of the occurrence of a revolution. Such a revolution might possibly be effected by a rising in arms against legitimate authority, but would more probably be one which, at first at any rate, proceeded under the forms of law. In Russia the effect in the long-run will be merely the emergence of the individualistic State under new management—an individualistic State the citizens of which might be far happier than in the Russia of the Czars, and which might well be capable of marching to great destinies. In England it is most probable that a Communistic revolution which failed would be wholly noxious. It is worth while, therefore, to consider what are the evils of society, what chance there is of their remedy under the actually existing system, who are likely to be the leaders of rebellion, and how our society and the institutions of the State are prepared to stand the shock. This is the purpose of the following chapters. I merely examine; I do not argue. Nor do I pretend to predict what will be the ultimate result. Far less do I tender advice. That is not the duty of the spectator.

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IV.

SOCIETY

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#### IV.

### SOCIETY.

To take a pessimistic view of the society in which he lives is natural to man. He is clearly not receiving his just due. That can be the fault only of society. This has been the view taken through the ages from the time when society began to exist and to leave records. Men have always looked back to a golden age or forward to a golden future. They have been and will be, but never are, happy. This view is the basis of the revealed religions. It is found in the old philosophies. It may here and there be discerned in the writings of the Middle Ages. It was strongly held in the eighteenth century.

According to the American Declaration, man is entitled to life—yes, but what kind of life and how long?—to liberty—yes, the liberty to hunt for a job and to starve if he cannot find one—to the pursuit of happiness—yes, to the pursuit—and these franchises,

meagre as they are, are in practice much reduced.

There has therefore always been much discontent in the world ; but man is a social animal, and he does not, merely because he is discontented, attempt, or even desire, to destroy the existing scheme of things. If he did, he would of necessity relapse to the state of nature so tersely described by Hobbes, and he prefers suffering to annihilation.

Great, therefore, is the power of the God of Things as they are. His Kingdom is an enduring Kingdom, and may not lightly be shaken. The preacher preaches in vain if none will hear him. That there may be fair hopes of harvest, the good seed must not be sown save on prepared soil and at due season. Before there is a revolution men must become revolutionary—that is, so gravely dissatisfied with things as they are that they contemplate their destruction with pleasure. That men are dissatisfied with things as they now are is patent, and it is for that reason that subversive propaganda is welcomed. It would therefore be well to ascertain who are the dissatisfied, and for what reason.

It is not the victims of an oppressive system who, unaided, can rebel against it with success. If they do they are crushed. No sudden Jac-

querie has ever shaken a State to its foundations. This was true even of the disorganised States of antiquity and the East, and is therefore *a fortiori* true of the highly organised modern State with its mighty and mobile resources. The victims, by the very fact that they are victims, are in some ways disqualified for successful insurrection. They necessarily lack resources, intelligence, organisation, and the will to win. It is against chains that they rebel, but it is the function of chains to impede. It is therefore men of the superior classes—men drawn from the ranks of the oppressors—that first march to the attack. It is for various reasons that men abandon their ancient banners and hereditary battle-cry. I pass over the party of Catiline, eager for excitement and plunder, who welcome all revolutions. I omit also the frondeurs who approve of any opinion as long as it is hostile to received opinion. Nor need we consider the cranks and the temperamental traitors. These classes always exist, and always have existed, but they are not powerful enough to do much to shake established order, unless there is thrown on their side the opinion of far more important classes.

At the present conjuncture there are important and solid classes who are very dissatisfied with things as they are.



In the first place, there are the compassionate. There are several kinds of pity. There is that noble and knightly compassion which is most god-like. There is an effeminate and debased pity which is devilish, because it stays the hand of justice. Between these poles there is a large range of sentiments stretching from honest and healthy sympathy to a somewhat hectic sentimentalism. God knows there is, and has always been, in this world of men occasion and the need for pity! But in this age men are more pitiful than they were. It may be that this in itself is a symptom that all is not well with society. For men become more pitiful in proportion as they become more imaginative and more sensitive, and it is in a failing race that imaginative and sensitive men abound.

Such a compassionate man, a young man, a transitory visitant to some great industrialised area, a gatherer of loose impressions, a hasty generaliser, might say:—

“I have seen oppression. This oppression is all the more oppression because it is a legal and hallowed oppression, wrought not by an individual but by a system. Society is divided into classes, and this not according to merit but according to mere accident. It is true that it is possible to pass from one class to

another, but, though to fall is easy, it is difficult to ascend. The lowest class, indigent of all things, lives a life not fit for beasts. They are the people without hope. Above these are numerous classes, all in varying degrees poor. Their poverty is not that secure and dignified poverty which is the nursery of manly virtues, but a poverty squalid and precarious; these are the unskilled workers with hand and brain, the proletariat. Above these come again numerous classes living lives of greater or lesser comfort, but all alike insecure. These are the skilled workers, the distributors and the directors. Above these come the wealthy with their satellites, their parasites, and the ministers of their pleasures. In this class, and in this class only, is there the opportunity for a full and man-like life. With the others it is not well. It is not well with the labourers. It is not well that children should be disinherited of their birthright, the heritage of joy, the freedom of the open country, the wonder of the sea, the beauty of flowers, the song of birds. It is not well that women should be deprived of the gladness of girlhood and the sanctuaries of marriage and motherhood, that they should be not priestesses at the altar of humanity but drudges in its sculleries. It is not well that men should toil all their lives

at monotonous tasks till hope and imagination dies in them, or worse, that men able and industrious should pace the streets, idle, seeking for their bread and the bread of those dear to them.

Who profits by this oppression? Not the wealthy. These men have the whole world to do them service, but they can make no use of this power. Therefore they waste the substance of thousands in pleasures that are not pleasures and bring no happiness. Not the man of the middle classes, anxious for his own future and the future of his children, scorning the classes below him from which he has risen, and into which he may at any time relapse, envying and apeing the classes above him who despise him. It is not here, in scorn and fear and malice, that happiness is to be found.

If it be true that the proletarians are content with their lot, that in itself is an indictment of the system. That men should be victims of oppression is bad, but that they should be contented victims is unendurable. It would seem that that thing which is robbing them of all the dues of manhood is now robbing them of manhood itself, inverting thus the doom of Abelard.

We talk contemptuously of the civilisation

of the East, but there is no such oppression there. There the land is full of the happy laughter of beloved children; no woman is there defrauded of the dues of womanhood; no man who rises in the morning has any doubt that to him also his daily bread will be assigned."

Some such thing the sympathetic young man might say. The optimist would aver that this presentment of society is not true. Our sentimentalist has projected his own personality into the objects of his observation, and thinks that conditions which would be intolerable to him are necessarily intolerable to others. That is not so. Even the denizen in the slum is not always unhappy there. The tenement is his home, and he loves it. Things which rather revolt our observer's refined taste give keen pleasure to simpler appetites. There is happiness of a sort for all classes. These classes are nothing like as sharply divided as he thinks, and the sense of security is far greater. As for the wealth produced by the system, the optimist alleges that the greater portion is returned to the producers or awarded to the distributors. There is till a large residue, and from that the State takes its share, applying it at its sole discretion to what it asserts to be communal objects. There is yet a large remainder, by far the greater portion of which is applied

wisely and well to the creation or development of industries. Of the small surplus the greater part is spent in innocent pleasures. Only an insignificant fragment is lavished on that insulting and outrageous luxury, which does, and rightly so, offend all generous men, more especially those who have not the means to vie with it. The optimist also points out that to live is a boon. He says that industrialism allows about forty millions to live in a country which if not industrialised would not support ten millions. He says that though there is much insecurity, yet the citizen is protected from personal violence at the hand of his fellows, from captivity or violent death at the hands of aliens, and that he is guaranteed from any sudden and complete failure of subsistence. Thus he lives in a State which would have seemed an Utopia to the men of the sixteenth century, and seems now a paradise to nine-tenths of the human race. He admits that many of the laws operate harshly, but avers that there is at least no apparent inequality before the law. If the action of the State works evil, that is not due to the malignancy and selfishness of the rulers, but to lack of wisdom and to the nature of man. He is sceptical about the mute inglorious Miltons of Stoke Pogis, but maintains that there never

was a time when the cramping effect of "the strait thing at home" was less pernicious, for there was never an age when unsupported merit found it easier to rise. He admits that there is much evil, but he sees that there is more tenderness and love in the world, that power is restrained, not merely by a mechanical check but also by one operating on the spirit, and that therefore even the people of the abyss need not lose hope. He thinks in fine that there are reasonable grounds for complaint, but that society is not incurable. He is probably fairly comfortably off himself, and hopes that in time "prosperity will be more generally diffused." Maybe he is right, but there are impatient souls who will not wait. These say that as long as one man starves who would work and cannot, as long as one woman is forced into the gutters against her will, as long as one child is condemned from birth, society is unjust.

The idea of justice is based on egoism. It seems an innate idea, and like all ideas of that class is primarily a device for self-preservation. The first general idea that a child forms is the idea of a separate individuality, "I am I, and that is that." The next general idea is "That is mine and not Tommy's." Then comes the proximate idea to justice, "That is mine and

that is Tommy's." The first cry of violated justice is that angry roar which goes up from the nursery table when Tommy has a piece of cake, and Jimmy, without due cause shown, finds his plate cakeless. From this it follows, "I ought to have mine and Tommy ought to have his, because, if the rights of Tommy are invaded without due cause, there is peril to mine." The idea of justice, therefore, in its origin highly individualistic, in its development is highly social.

Justice is attributed to the Deity in all the revealed religions. As regards that God whom the theist tries to deduce from nature this quality is not apparent. There is no doubt that to offend against the laws of nature does entail a penalty, but it is not always the offender who pays. Moreover, as it is impossible to avoid a breach of laws which are often contradictory, the punishment appears an act not of justice but of tyranny. Nevertheless, man will always clamour for justice, and be outraged if it be denied. He will always receive and never accept the reply of Valentinian.

To the man enamoured of justice there seems much that is revolting in the present organisation of society. He says: "Rewards are not only not distributed according to merit but not according to any ascertainable system.

An unjust system which works by inflexible rule has some sort of form and figure of justice. If it were always the case that an assassin was rewarded and his victim's family hanged, we should know where we were, and could regulate our lives accordingly. But society treats her children like a foolish mother, who one day pets Tommy for his intelligent interest in feline anatomy, and the next punishes him for pulling poor pussy's tail. Nor is that the worst of it. Let it be assumed that there is some occult reason why some modern Eugene Aram, a poor lad, the son of poor but honest parents, devotes himself unaided to the pursuit of learning, struggles on as the father of a large and increasing family, passes his life in the drudgery of teaching and engrossing, and is finally hanged for a flagitious murder; while some modern Porson, a poor lad, the son of poor but honest parents, devotes himself unaided to the pursuit of learning, finds by accident a patron, and dies respected after a useful and honourable life. It may well be that there is a certain inadequacy in Aram which is not visible in Porson. Aram, 'equal to either fortune,' was in some ways alien from humanity, and was after all but an amateur—his murder was a badly bungled affair—while Porson with all his faults was indubitably



a man. It may be that in the code of society it is right that inadequacy should be a capital offence, but the question still remains, who is responsible for that inadequacy? And a very cursory inspection will show that in many cases it is society itself which is responsible for that sin. For inadequacy is the sin of the sickly body, of the degenerate brain, of the tortured soul; but it is in the alembics of society that is distilled the deadly bane which infects all these. Like the God of the Supralapsarians, it is society that creates the sin, decrees the pains, incites the sinner, and awards the chastisement, that its power and justice may be magnified.

‘With cries of On! he bids the quarry flee:  
With cries of On! he bids the hound pursue.’”

So he who seeks for justice in the world and finds it not. Such a man might well, like the sentimentalist, receive the Communistic doctrine: “To each according to his needs, and the euthanasia for the incompetent.” For if mere life be not a boon, then mere death is not an evil, and to inflict it is no injustice. There is in the grave darkness and the worm, but not oppression.

With the correctness of the opinions of the compassionate and of those who love justice

I have no concern. It is not therefore my business to examine their validity. I am not writing propaganda: I merely wish to indicate the classes among which the propaganda of Communism is likely to be effective. But it is to be observed that for a Reformer indignation alone is not sufficient equipment. Remedies applied hastily without due diagnosis by those who are not expert often enough are not remedies but aggravations. There is no man so cruel as a sentimentalist in a hurry, no man so unjust as the lay dispenser of precipitate equity.

Such persons, who are influenced primarily by their emotions, find support in quarters where sentimentalism is not expected—namely, among the economists and evolutionists.

I have read the books of certain captains of industry with admiration and a certain horror—admiration at the efficiency of the mechanism of industry, and horror at the sacrifice of individuality exacted by that efficiency. In the Communistic Manoa there will be the same efficiency and the same sacrifice, but the inhabitants of that State will have been educated up to a sacrifice which they will thus make automatically. There will be the sacrifice of each to all, and not the sacrifice of all to one. Such a sacrifice to a master is distasteful, however kind a master the master may be,

and however clearly he sees that, omitting the consideration of justice and humanity, contented labour is more valuable than discontented labour.

But however this may be, it is easy to understand that those familiar with the operations of those great businesses, common in the present age, must see much to shock them in the waste and ineffectiveness connected with the present individualistic system. That rests on competition. That there should be competition there must be competitors. Some of the competitors must fail, and thereby prove that they were not fitted for the struggle in which they engaged. The bankrupt grocer, for example, was clearly not intended to be a grocer. God may have fitted him to be a doctor or a violinist, or possibly a ploughman or a dock-hand, but a grocer—no. The years he has applied to learning his trade and struggling against the fated coming of the official assignee were years of wasted labour. Wasted, too, was the capital which he has invested in his business. A system which allows men to experiment and fail is necessarily a wasteful system. In society a new employee is allowed to try himself in any post from that of manager to that of night-watchman till he finds the niche suited for him. No big business run on those lines would

survive for a year. A wise method of selection whereby the aptitudes of each employee are discovered, tested, and estimated, and he or she is then employed in that post for which he or she is best fitted by nature and training, this is one of the means whereby the costs of production are kept down. The individualism of the tastes of the consumers also leads to much waste. You have only to look at the houses of the people to see how this individualism wastes labour. The labour of brickmakers and layers, glaziers, slaters, plumbers, carpenters, and many others is in great part consumed uselessly because householders prefer to live each in his individual castle, constructed according to his individual taste. Similarly there is here also a great waste of raw material. There is sad waste also in distribution and direction owing to the fact that people will live not where they should but where they wish to live, and will insist on a supply of commodities which they do not really need, but which appeal to their tastes.

These are but instances. On all sides is clearly evidence of great waste both of ability and of labour and material due to ill-regulated supply, demand, and distribution. The man used to the big business looks on all this with disapprobation. There is also another source

of waste. There are numerous people who consume commodities without any visible return. A shareholder in a big business has at least supplied the capital, but the parasites of modern society are parasites and nothing more. They merely dissipate capital which could be better applied to developing and extending the big business, and thus reducing prices to the consumer.

The individualist points out that there must be some incentive to work before work is done, and that it is in order to gratify his individual tastes that a man works. If his desires are towards wasting money, then he must be allowed to waste money, or he will not be allowed to gratify his tastes, and consequently will not work. Nothing is more frugal than the stomach, and the necessities of bare existence might be obtained by the labour of a few hours in the week. It is not for the "bread and marge" but for the jam that men now work hard. As for the parasites, many men do not like work, but do it because they hope thereafter to live a life of leisure, and also to allow those dear to them hereafter to avoid what is so hateful. In short, labour produces wealth, and men labour because they desire wealth, and they desire wealth because wealth is power, and they desire power because they

wish to do what they please—that is, to gratify their tastes. All this is no doubt very wrong and egoistic, and we may look forward to an age when men will be more social, and will not desire to gratify their own tastes in disregard of the interests of the society, or rather they will have a distaste for all that causes loss to the community. Only the age is not yet, and we must depend for its arrival on slow processes of creative evolution. Such is the defence of the individualist. It may be a good defence on the whole case, or it may be bad. Meanwhile it is a clear admission of the Communistic assertion that waste and individualism are necessarily allied, and the business man remains dissatisfied.

This waste is found, of course, not only in business but in that vast partnership which is society. In that partnership the capital is the sum of the achievements of the past, the partners are every human being born or hereafter to be born, and the adventure is the destinies of the race. Wherever energy has been misapplied there has been waste of capital. Wherever energy is not applied there is a fraud on the members of the concern. It is impossible to deny that there has been, and is now, grievous dissipation of capital and gross malversation, and it is not perhaps a subject for surprise

that the keen business man should think that it is about time a liquidator was appointed before more losses were incurred, and that the enterprise should be reconstructed. That may well be true, but sometimes too hasty an appointment of a liquidator to a shaky concern means total and final bankruptcy.

There is, however, little doubt that familiarity with the operations of big businesses, especially those big businesses conducted by the State or the municipalities, does accustom the citizen to the idea of communal industry. If a State post-office, why not a State dairy? If a State railway, why not a State coal-mine? We do not now hire condottieri, or issue letters of marque and reprisal. We have instead an Army and Navy. We do not leave the arrest and prosecution of felons to private enterprise. We have a public police. Seeing that these things work so well, and seeing that private enterprise works so badly, it can, thinks the impatient idealist, be due only to the egoism and stupidity of man and the rapaciousness of the capitalist that the immediate entry into Manoa is barred.

The scientist is also inclined to be impatient with society. We are all wolves struggling with one another in a pit. As long as that is so, it means that only the keen teeth, the quick

eye, the muscles of steel will prevail; but there are many qualities and possessions more desirable than these. But apart from this, and looking on society merely as a means for assuring the continuance of the race without deterioration, he pronounces an industrialised society as not capable of performing those duties. The people live in unnatural conditions, they are exposed to excessive mental and physical strain, they have no time for rest or reasonable recreation, and are therefore driven to deleterious things for diversion. From such parents there is little hope of sound offspring. Ability is sought for and encouraged, but not overgenerously, and is exhorted above all things to be provident. The wellbeing secured by ability is great, but is also precarious. Therefore there is continual selection of able men and women, but the conditions in which they are placed after selection are such that they are disinclined to become parents. As it is now easy, owing to the advance of science, for people to live a conjugal life without becoming parents, ability tends to become sterile. But ability is hereditary. On the other hand, as great numbers are in great misery, and this is often due to their feebleness of will and lack of intelligence, and as there is no hope for them in any case, for no improvidence can possibly make



them worse off than they are, feebleness of will and lack of intelligence are prolific. But these things are also hereditary. Thus on both sides there is working a deteriorative selection. The scientists tell us that if the race is to continue at a level of energy and intelligence which will enable it to live, it must either abandon this structure of industrialism that it has raised and go back to far simpler conditions of life and industry, or it must submit to the rule of eugenics, and there must be strict control of the conditions under which future citizens are created. No such strict control is possible in an individualistic State. The alternative therefore to destruction is the Communistic State.

The sum of the teaching is that evolution is leading away from Manoa into some wholly abhorrent region. The impatient idealist, therefore, deduces that things cannot be left to themselves much longer; in fact, that if evolution will not do what it should, we must try revolution. Here also then the subversive finds a justification of his programme.

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V.

## PALLIATIVES



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V.

PALLIATIVES.

“ASCALON is my city and I should praise it, but——” I have no particular reason to love capitalistic society. I have on the whole obeyed its rules, and when I have broken them I have taken my punishment (often a severe punishment) without howling. Nevertheless, I have not so far succeeded in appropriating permanently a single penny of the tainted wealth which lies so plenteously around me. Food, lodging, and clothes, the minimum that any slave must have, have been mine. Or again, I have fought in the arena a long time, and am now expecting my honest mission; but I am by no means sure that this savage and perverse beast may not even yet play me a foul trick or two. In any case, I leave those to whom I am bound less equipped than myself to face a competition far severer than that which confronted me. Theoretically, therefore, I should not shed tears to see the smoke go up

from the sacred keep of Ascalon. Actually, if there be any consciousness and knowledge of mortal things in the grave, it would grieve me even there to think that the temples of my own gods, though they love me not, and the palaces of my own Lords, though they are not dividers of bread, were piled in ruin, and the men and women I have known were heaps of unremembered dust, and that all the epic of man, all that heroism and baseness had ended in the bathos of annihilation.

I daresay I should have been a subversive myself had I been younger, and should have marched cheerily under the Red Flag, with strange and hairy comrades, to carve out by my good flaying-knife wider franchises for man in general and myself in particular. But at my age the sipping of gruel seems more attractive than the drinking of blood, and the night-cap than the helmet. I have seen and read of too many revolutions to have much hope for man from them. I fear that man still needs a master, a clement master if possible, but in any case a master. He has not in my opinion yet reached a stage of development when he can stand without irons. I admit, therefore, that society is cruel, unjust, wasteful, and apparently pernicious. But I do not see what we are going to do about it. I see no chance of much im-

provement by evolution, because evolution seems leading us, for the present at least, to things worse than we have yet undergone. Nor does it seem to me that what have been devised as remedies for the defects of individualism are really remedies. They, while appearing to be sanative, are at most palliatives, and at worst aggravate the disease.

Communism must be taken or left as a whole. This is a product for which there is no useful substitute. There seems much misunderstanding on this point. People laugh at the theologians of the fourth century for squabbling about one vowel, but surely to say that (X) is like (Y) is to assert with the utmost emphasis that (X) is not (Y). What is called Socialistic legislation is not a substitute for Communism. Such legislation may be mere plunder exacted by a dominant class from a wealthy and defenceless class. That is no more Communism than was the mediæval tax on the Jews. Athenagoras laid down with precision the true democratic doctrine that in a democracy the wealthy are, as regards their wealth, merely the trustees of the community. Or again, such legislation may be the ransom paid by a wealthy community to buy off for a time possible enemies. That is no more Communism than was the payment of Danegeld. Or again, it may be

truly social legislation intended to better the condition, moral and physical, of every one of the citizens. Such cultural legislation is characteristic of a wise capitalist State. The subversive tells us that the planter of old days would, if prudent and desirous of making a permanent profit, prefer that his slaves should be well-fed and contented rather than famished and mutinous. This is perhaps an unfair way of putting it, and it would be kinder to say that the enlightened selfishness of the privileged classes teaches them that to secure themselves in their privileges the mass of the people must be happy, and that the individual prosperity which is not accompanied by general prosperity is but precarious. Be that as it may, however, it is plain that to demand from a minority the sacrifice of a portion of their possessions for the benefit of the majority is not the same thing as abolition of classes and the exaction from all members of the community the total sacrifice; not only of their property but also of their individuality and ability. This is the more plain when it is considered that in many cases the sacrifice now demanded can, without much difficulty, be shifted off from the shoulders of those who apparently bear it on to the shoulders of others, and not infrequently on to those of the apparent beneficiaries. It is therefore not

very safe to conclude that, because the privileged classes permit and even encourage a certain amount of Socialistic legislation, they are converted or are on the verge of conversion to Communism. As it is cheaper for the big business to pay a police rate than to hire a band of Arab mercenaries, to pay fire insurance than to organise a private fire-brigade, so it is far cheaper to pay high rates and a few pennies more in the income tax in order that the Municipality or the State may indulge in social experiments than to run the risk of a revolution, or even of serious disorder. Moreover, there is always the chance that the loss may not be wholly loss. But if it were ever quite certain that such payment would not avert but would finance the revolution, then I am by no means sure that things would go so smoothly. Privilege, and particularly capital, will not fight if it is possible to avoid a fight, preferring to come to its ends otherwise. But if it is really driven into a corner and is now faced with imminent destruction, it will, unless hopelessly demoralised, fight, and fight very desperately. It would appear to me then that eager idealism in its impatience to realise true Communism might well find an opposition whose strength is not yet divined.

Socialistic legislation is thus legislation of a



well-known class. It is thrown to a deluded people by crafty statesmen, as in old days seamen used to throw a tub to a whale. It pretends to be Communistic, but is not. Expenditure of the "Socialistic" kind may well gratify certain individuals. So did the theoric budget at Athens and the corn-grants at Rome. But it is possible to gratify the individual by means which in the long-run do him harm. I do not say that there is much of that kind of legislation with us. The State does not now perpetually aim at giving a present gratification to the citizen at the expense of corrupting him personally, though this device is not wholly unknown. It is, however, possible and common to benefit—that is, do real good to—the individual, even to every individual in the State, without benefiting the community. As it is shallow to talk of the community as a thing in itself, alien to and distinct from the individual members, so it is shallow to regard a community as consisting merely of the actual members existing at the time of observation, as if they and it had no past or future. If every man, woman, and child in England were granted (under conditions which did not destroy their self-respect) a pension of half-a-crown a week from communal funds, that would certainly be agreeable to all, but it would not in the slightest

degree benefit the community, nor would it be in any way communistic. It would probably lead to a general diminution of production, and as a means of redistribution of wealth it would be merely taking from some and giving to all, which also is not communistic. Much of this legislation reminds me of the humane master who, seeing his dog hungry, fed it with its own tail, or the ingenious lady who, finding her dress length too short, cut off a yard from one end and sewed it on to the other.

Communistic legislation, if it is to be really communistic, must be thorough. To pick out a few evils (particularly crying evils) and legislate to stop them, or rather their clamour, is in effect merely to shift the burden from one body of citizens to the other, and thus does nothing to cure the ills of society as a whole. It is not only different from, it is inconsistent with, the communistic ideal that takes "all from each for all," it takes "some from some for some," which is purely individualistic. Many books have been written on this subject, but it is only necessary to take those two old and established taxes introduced into our system long before the word Socialism was coined. These taxes are most beneficent to individuals, and not even the most hardened egotist would in these days dream of protesting against them.

I refer to the poor-rate and the rate for education. The laws imposing these taxes are indeed predatory to a certain extent, because they are to a certain extent levied on one class for the benefit of another; for though all might partake of the comforts of the poorhouse and the blessings of free education, large classes do not. But this is a depredation of which, as long as it is not pushed to excess, no one would be likely to complain.

This legislation is also cultural. Even those who do not profit directly by the expenditure do profit by the fact that the community to which they belong is not a callous and brutal society, such as some of which we read. Charity is a divine thing even when organised, even when administered by Bumble. A community which has no place for divine things is a backward community, however rich and powerful it may be. Similarly it is easy enough to see that every one of us profits by free education, both morally and materially. But all this does not make the legislation truly communistic. No one can deny that it is lawful for the community to shelter the helpless. But the poorhouse would not be found in the communistic State. There would in Manoa be no able-bodied poor. There would be a limit on the numbers of the superannuated poor,

and there would be for incurables and degenerates the lethal chamber. The sentimental Communist may here protest, but his protest is not valid. The conditions of the Communist State would prevent the adhibition of the dysthanasia now adhibited by the individualistic State to its incompetents. Such a State must therefore itself apply coldly and scientifically to the increase of incompetence those checks which our society applies harshly and at random. In fact, if wasters will not die, they must be killed. Otherwise the community must provide that tainted persons are not born, or if born are as soon as possible prevented from doing further mischief by propagating their infirmities.

As for the school-rate, no one would now deny that free and compulsory education is in many ways an advantage, not only to individuals but with certain limitations to the State. It is therefore an object on which a wise capitalist State may well spend public funds. But it is not communistic. The modern child lives under communistic conditions till he is fourteen, but is thereafter individualistic. The State, that is, equips, as far as it can, all children equally for the battle of life, and then turns them out to fend for themselves, according to their individual luck and ability.

This is much as if a philanthropist, pitying the defenceless condition of two pugilists about to box with one another with bare fists, was to arm both of them with knuckle-dusters. The communistic State would certainly educate its children, but it would educate each child so as to discover and develop its peculiar capabilities, not for the purpose of fitting such child more efficiently to wage the battle of life against his brethren, but that he might more effectively, in union with his brethren, serve the community.

Such is the anti-Communist nature of these two very favourable specimens of this class of legislation. Sociologists can supply examples in plenty of socialistic measures which are much less beneficial and equally anti-communistic. Here I am trying only to ascertain how far this sort of legislation is likely to bring the communistic idea any nearer, or to form for the impatient idealist a palatable substitute for the real thing.

I am sincerely of the opinion that it does not form any permanent remedy for the ills of society, though it may put off the evil day. I quite admit that much of it is not only inevitable but laudable, but that does not alter its nature, and will not exempt us from paying the price. I will leave the complex society

of England and consider a common phenomenon in much less confusing surroundings. India is a country primitive in its organisation. Its population is dependent on agriculture, and agriculture is still largely dependent on the periodical rains. There is not much industry of the modern type, manufacture being still in the hands of hereditary experts. The caste system, the difficulties of communication, and the great differences of climate render it impossible for the people to flow freely from an agricultural area to an industrial area. The people increase up to the margin of subsistence, and have therefore few reserves of cash or food or fodder. Then the rains fail in one province, and there is neither food nor work for any one for a year at least. The pedantic economist of the old school said: "This is very sad, but we cannot help it. We must not interfere with the grain trade or attempt to fix prices; that will prevent the free flow of cereals into the affected regions. We cannot feed the people; that would pauperise them. If they die, they will leave a fertile territory unoccupied. Sooner or later people will flow in there from the densely populated areas, and all will be well. Such of the present population as do not die will have learned by experience that they must not depend wholly on agriculture, or at any rate on un-

irrigated agriculture, for their subsistence. They will accumulate grain and fodder reserves, they will dig wells and canals, and set up cottage industries, and the survivors will be a far more thrifty and thriving people than the present cultivators."

So science, and if the rulers had been beings devoid of human feelings they might have found much that was sound in this doctrine; but they were not creatures impassive like gods. They were human beings, and obeyed the voice of human nature—a voice as usual appealing to sundry emotions. They were Christians, and every Christian is delighted to feed the hungry if it does not cost him anything. No one likes to see a fellow-creature dying of starvation, or even to hear of such cases; at any rate when the number of deaths is very large. The rulers feared discontent among the people. They feared censure from the sentimental in England. They feared for their revenue; for though while it may be quite true that population would eventually flow into the devastated lands, this was not certain. They were used to the Oriental idea of the paternal nature of monarchy. Therefore they discarded the doctrines of the economists, and met famine with famine relief. Their policy was twofold, prophylactic and remedial. Under

the head of prophylactic measures were such devices as the advance of money at unremunerative rates for the digging of wells and purchase of well bullocks; the making of roads, not likely to be needed in normal times, but of vital importance in times of dearth; the building of railways, which just paid the cost of their upkeep; the construction of tanks and canals, which the people did not use in normal years. As soon as the famine (according to the cycle of Meton) sets in, then every man, woman, and child who is able and chooses to work is provided with work. The payment is on piece rates, but the rates are so calculated that the feeblest can earn his living, for the money wages fluctuate with the price of necessities with a constant factor for sex and age. Food rations are broken; grain if necessary is imported and sold by officials. Free lodging is provided. The sick and infirm are hunted out, and conveyed free of charge to the hospitals or relief camps, and treated free. There are still large classes whom the measures of the State do not help—men, for instance, and particularly women of the higher classes, who cannot work with their hands; artisans and the like, who would be ruined for ever if their touch was spoiled by the coarse field labour. The relief given by Government must there-



fore be supplemented by charitable relief; but it is a lasting disgrace to each executive officer concerned if there is in the area entrusted to him a single death from starvation. Thus to the field labourer and the small farmer a famine (in old days the most terrible of scourges) is often a jolly sort of picnic, where a man, especially a man with a large family, can earn a good maintenance and save money.

This is clearly a socialistic enterprise on a very large scale, for famine operations extend over areas which in Europe would be those of great kingdoms; but it does, in my opinion, merely shift the burden from a comparatively small number of shoulders on to a large number, so that instead of a few who are crushed by the weight of a ton, there are many who bear the weight of an ounce. There are many ounces in a ton, but if ounce after ounce be added, the ton weight will eventually be reached; for the burden is ever growing. The work done by the famine labourer is comparatively unproductive, its value amounting probably to about 10 per cent of the cost of sustaining him and his dependants. The products expended on so maintaining him are therefore lost and for ever gone. They have to be taken from somewhere. They can come only from the bulging corn-bins of other pro-

vinces. Thus that A. in the Deccan should not die, B. in Bengal must part with some of his property. However much the transaction may be perplexed and obscured by the terms of art and the devices of the financier, sinking funds, loans, insurance funds, taxation for unproductive and partially reproductive expenditure, and the like, the net result is that in order that A. should not starve wholly, B. must eat less. It is not as if there was a sudden accession of energy through the whole community, so that all residents set to work to repair the ravages of famine, and the reserves were thus not exhausted or were fully replaced. It is true that taxation in a backward community often encourages production beyond what is necessary to pay the taxes, but there is a limit to this. At present in India, as elsewhere, there is such a large margin of production over waste that the strain is not felt ; but as in India so elsewhere a time may come when the accumulated arrears of waste may equal or exceed the net return of industry. I do not say that this is a probable contingency, but it is possible. In that case the demands of the tax-gatherer would sweep off so much of the products of industry that enough would not be left to give the members of the community an average living wage. Thus let it be supposed that

there was every year such a famine in India that three-quarters of the country produced no crops at all, then in that case the remaining quarter would have to feed the whole. But the inhabitants of India would thus all be reduced to starvation, and the whole community perish.

I have taken this example from India because it is simple to understand, but the same truth that you cannot support Paul in idleness without robbing Peter is true also in the highly organised West. In India there is one industry which occasionally is unproductive, and needs temporary support from communal funds. In the West there may well be a thousand such all needing partial but permanent support. The support may take the form of prohibition, subvention, or the conferment of a monopoly, or a licence to fix its own profits, but the net result is always that products are taken from A. to support B. That is to say, Peter is robbed to pay Paul. As if you go on robbing Peter too long or too ruthlessly he will cease to produce a surplus over the minimum necessary to keep him alive, you are by this sort of administration condemning all the members of the community to penury. I do not import the moral question into the discussion. It may be the duty of the ruler to rob Peter,

though there are many incentives to the ruler to rob Peter even when it is not strictly necessary. The existence of Socialistic legislation is therefore no certain cure for the ills of society. The Communistic State requires that there should be maximum productiveness, minimum waste, and equitable distribution. "Socialistic" legislation guarantees none of these things. By it wealth is merely shifted from the hands of one set of men to those of another. There is no guarantee that it will in the hands of the new owners be any more productive than it was.

I certainly do not blame the powerful labour unions for trying to extract by bargaining from the employers, and so from the public, either as individuals or as taxpayers, all they can. It is right for them to do so. We are living in an individualist society, the basis of which is competition. "Get all you can for as low a price as possible." It would be ridiculous to talk Communism to a Trades Union, however communistic were the officials thereof. Suppose the solicitors of England went on strike refusing to work any more for six-and-eightpence, and clamouring for a living wage of ten shillings. It would not be very sensible to go to the leaders of the "men" and say, "Tut! tut! this is very selfish of you. Con-

sider what a key industry yours is, and how the whole being of the community depends on your beneficent labours. You are the priests and ministers of earthly justice. Think of the misery this wasteful and wicked strike will spread among the makers of wigs, gowns, and tin boxes, the japanners, the law stationers, the bailiffs, and sheriff's officers. Think of the promising young barristers listening wistfully for the tread on the stairs that never comes. Think of all the poor litigants standing thirsty on the banks of the river of justice with none to lead them to the safe watering-place. Think of all the old ladies who want to change their wills. Think of all the shy young brides to be, who dream, and dream in vain, of settlements." The leaders would reply: "We are not living in Manoa but in Chancery Lane. We are now talking business, not sentiment. We have a valuable thing to sell, knowledge, and you have a valuable thing to buy it with, cash. We intend to stick out for the highest price you will give, and you have the right to stick out for the lowest price we will take. Meantime you will find this interview charged at ten shillings." This is all very good sense and very effective in an individualistic State, but it is not Communism. Whether it is calculated to cure the ills of society is another

question. If the rulers were superhumanly wise and just and powerful, only the meritorious Paul would be paid, and the unmeritorious Peter robbed. In that case the community might be permanently benefited by the interference of the rulers with the higgling of the market. As it is, the success of Paul in his clamours for aid depends merely on chance and the strength of his good right hand. It may well be that it so happens that the weight of the community is thrown in this struggle on the side of those who are not meritorious at all. There is no system about the process. There is therefore no guarantee that this transfer of wealth from one set of citizens to another will in any way benefit the community or cure the evils incident to an industrialised society.

Meanwhile neither the habitual exaction nor the habitual payment of Danegeld is over-good for morality. Nor is the state of insecurity which present conditions produce likely in the long-run to increase products, or to cause less waste of them, or to cause them to be divided equitably. Few persons, for instance, understand how the lives and fortunes of millions are bandied about by the ebb and flow of the black sea of agio. Yet the transfer of a few millions of bullion from the cellar of one bank to the cellar of another may mean that some

great industry on which is dependent the bread of thousands must shut its doors. In normal times bullion flows freely from one country to another, its movement being regulated by well-known laws. But bullion, that tasty and defenceless prey, is reluctant to move into the domain of the great carnivores unless it is quite sure of adequate protection. Where there is no security there bullion will not come, and thence bullion will speedily migrate. Capital, intelligence, and even industry are subject to like laws, though they obey more slowly. All these love security, and will eventually migrate thither where it is to be found. But an industrialised country where bullion, capital, intelligence, and industry are not to be found is in a condition "precarious and far from permanent." It would seem then that some of the legislation and administrative acts on which we so pride ourselves, however humane and palliative they may be, might ultimately prove damnatory rather than beneficial to the community—that is, they may rather increase than diminish the evils of our individualistic and capitalistic system. The impatient idealist therefore, far from finding that a socialised individualistic society is a palatable substitute for Communism, might well find Things as They Will Be far more revolting than Things

as They Are. It is this state of mind that leads to revolution.

So much for industry. To return to society in general, and to consider social legislation. I have touched on the instances of the poor-rate and the education taxes, but that was merely to show that these had nothing to do with Communism. The question now is how far such measures cure the ills of society, and the answer is that they do not. Take the example of the clinic for children. The God of Things as They Are used to say: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for I know how to deal with them. 30 per cent of new-born infants shall die before they reach the end of the first year. These are the children of tainted and feeble-minded parents. You need not regret them. They are most likely tainted or feeble-minded themselves. Another 30 per cent will die childless. These are the unattractive women, and the undomesticated men who would not make good fathers. We will breed from the remainder. Thus we shall keep the stock sound, and you need not fear over-population." Thus the God of Things as They Are. It was found, however, that he did not keep his promises. It was found that many valuable children died, and that many degenerates lived. The Communist would put vigilant guards at



the portals of the palace of Life, allowing exit and entrance only to those whom the community deemed fit to exercise those privileges. The socialised individualistic State said : " We will as far as possible guarantee that every baby born shall have a fair chance of life. If he is fit, we will keep him so. If he is unfit, we will if possible make him fit. If he is incurable, we will at least patch him up and let him live, diminishing his sufferings as much as possible."

No one would deny the kindness and humanity of this policy, but it will be seen on inspection that its effects are not necessarily such as benefit the community. Products are taken from the general stock in order to enable all children to grow to maturity, without any guarantee whatsoever that they will ever replace the products so abstracted.

The system of the God of Things as They Were was a rough and harsh system. It sacrificed many valuable lives, it preserved some faulty ones, but it did on the whole guarantee that those only reached maturity who were capable of repaying the society which had allowed them to live. The modern system, as stated, gives no such guarantee. Further, in our densely populated country there is not much room for an increase of population. There-

fore for every child that is preserved from death, a child must be preserved from birth. Not all those whose lives are saved are useful to the community. Many of those who might have been born, and are not, would be. For it is, of course, chiefly among the abler men, the skilled artisans and the brain-workers, that birth control is practised. Thus a policy, humane and laudable in itself, may actually be a deteriorative policy. It all depends on incalculable chances.

Whether this kind of legislation really adds much to the sum of human happiness may be doubted. Taking the children's clinic: Is it better that a woman should give birth to a child and lose it, or that a woman should never have a child at all? Authorities, and particularly the poets, differ. Personally I should say that the permanent unhappiness caused by the defraudation of natural instincts in the one case was worse than the unhappiness, poignant as it may be for the moment, caused by the process of nature in the other.

Considering these things, it would seem that, admitting that society is cruel, unjust, wasteful, and pernicious, nevertheless a Socialised capitalistic society is not in essentials better. The cruelty, the injustice, the waste, and the deteriorative influences are all there too. They

do not work so much harm to individuals, and therefore do not attract so much attention, but they will in the long-run destroy this society as they have destroyed others. There seems no present movement towards the Communistic Manoa, which must indeed be reached by altogether another road. That being so, and there being a certain amount of impatience among the idealists and a certain lack of resisting power in society and its institutions, it is possible that there may be a revolution. It is necessary therefore to see whether society is altogether satisfied with itself, and prepared to resist attempts more or less violent to upset it.

It might be of interest to make a detailed survey of society, examining in turn each institution, and then having judged of the soundness of each part to judge of the soundness of the whole. Is, for instance, all well with Parliamentary Government? with the Press? with the Church or moral teaching? with finance, and especially international finance? But this task is arduous, and not necessary for my purpose. Amyclae, often doomed to die, continues to exist. England has in the past always proved so vigorous that, whenever our national temples have shown a lack of stability, we have been able, without

demolition and re-edification, to repair what was faulty, and to strengthen what was sound, and thus to give to the building a new and more robust youth. As long as England possesses that vital energy, so long will the croakers croak in vain. But there are signs—I do not say of senility, but of a certain loss of vitality, a certain lack of ability to comply with changing conditions, a certain incompetence—which, if they are real and not illusions, permanent and not temporary, would be ominous indeed.

The State as trustee for society will need wise leadership and loyal co-operation of all citizens agreed on this one thing at least, that the State shall live. But that wisdom, that loyalty, that co-operation, that energy, are there not abroad influences hostile to these?

It is not on fleets and armies, on fortifications by sea and by land, it is on the valorous heart of the citizen that the State depends for its security against the foreign foe. Those help, but this is essential. Against the domestic foe it is not to the power of physical force, not to the best-modelled institutions, not to the wisdom of the few, it is to the faith of the citizen in his city that we must trust.

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VI.

DOUBT

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## VI.

### DOUBT.

STOLIDITY and egoism are the true guardians of the national penates. Egoism is that which causes the individual to look after himself. Now as it is quite certain that if he does not look after himself no one else will, and as, though the individual might possibly continue to exist without the community, yet the community could not possibly exist without the individual, it follows that without the egoism of the individual there could be no society. Stolidity is the name that we give that quality which makes the mind reluctant to accept new ideas. But if the mind is not easily receptive of new ideas, the owner of the mind will not be tempted easily into making new experiments. It is dangerous to experiment rashly. Stolidity thus preserves the individual from danger, and anything which preserves the individual from danger is also a preserver of society.

A healthy society is sure of itself. It has



no desire to change. It is willing to jog along in the old ruts. It is suspicious of ideas. It abhors *a priori* reasoning. It has a poor opinion of intelligence, which it suspects of laughing at it, but under compulsion will use it. Its morality or its religion will reflect its state of mind, and will be placid, contented, and mildly humanitarian, for good temper is a sign of health. The spiritual benefits to which it looks forward will be in effect refined material benefits. Its Government will admirably express its will, and will be temperate, resolute, and rather unimaginative. Such a community will on due occasion be found capable of extremes of heroism and self-sacrifice, because it has not dissipated its stock of emotion on minor occasions. Such a community looks back with pride on the past and with optimism to the future, partly because it has not the imagination to see the perils which it has escaped, the treasures it has lost, and the dangers with which it is menaced, but principally because self-satisfaction also is a symptom of health. This is Ascalon perhaps; but Ascalon was a strong city, and as a matter of historical fact it was Dagon, the God of Ascalon, which held out to the last against the Kingdom of the Nazarene. To be the citizen of a strong city is no slight advantage. It is not the luck of

every man to go to Corinth, and thus it is the fortune of some to miss the triumph of Mummius. England in the last century was such an Ascalon, but it is ceasing to be such. It is beginning to doubt. A castle that parleys is ready to surrender, a society that doubts is ready to crumble. It is the subversive who is the apostle of doubt. Security is a mental state. We are all of us, every instant, menaced with immediate torture and death, but we do not trouble ourselves, not because we are but because we feel secure. So stability in a society. Society is continually menaced with eversion, but a healthy society, which does not doubt, disregards this danger, and acts as if it were established for ever. But as soon as doubt sets in, then nothing is secure, nothing is stable. Every question then becomes an open question. There are no axioms. There are no known data. There can be no fixed policy, but merely a set of hasty improvisations. Such are the symptoms of a society in decadence, and in such a society the subversive plays a formidable part.

It is necessary to distinguish between subversion and reform. Take the story of Crainquebille, a notable achievement of a great subversive. It relates an amusing and very pathetic tale of a poor old costermonger who

is persecuted by the police. So far it is merely an anecdote. It implies also that the French police are Jacks-in-office, and the magistrates too inclined to support authority. That is the spirit of the reformer. If the accusation be true, it would be possible to amend things. But it goes on to imply that man is necessarily so stupid and ignorant that there can be no such thing as justice as long as men are men. That is subversivism. In attacking the institution, it attacks the idea behind the institution. It is clear that if it is impossible for man to do justice to man, then civilisation is a mere farce. Or again, the man who tells the story of an unhappy marriage may, like Shakespeare when he wrote *Othello*, be telling a story and nothing more. The man who says that the marriage laws of England are so foolish that unhappy marriages are the rule is a reformer (wise or foolish), because he admits that, by a change in the law, we might apply a permanent remedy to current evils; but a man who says that the idea of marriage as a monogamous union for life is false is a subversive. It is sometimes difficult to see where the reformer ends and the subversive begins, but the distinction in essentials is clear. The spread of subversive doctrines in a society is in general an indication of its decrepitude.

It is perhaps for this reason that intellectual subversivism is so fashionable in the England of to-day. There are certainly a number of persons well qualified to make subversive doctrines popular. The intelligentsia is very powerful. I am not speaking of intellect, which still abounds but has little influence. I am speaking principally of the small fry of intelligence, the grasshoppers that make ring with their importunate chatter the meadow in which silently ruminating lie the mighty and stolid oxen.

The modern age attaches too much weight to the opinions of intelligence. The first thing that the Roman did when he had attained to wealth and office was to go down to the slave-market and buy a philosopher. The system had its disadvantages, especially for the philosopher, but it was on the whole a sound system, and indeed the least dangerous way of making intelligence useful to the community. When, however, the state of politics is such that executive power passes from the solid classes to the intelligentsia, and is exercised by the latter, not indirectly by reason of the legitimate influence of intelligence on the rulers, but directly, when in fact intelligence claims to dictate and execute policy, then there is danger. Plato said that the world would never be well

till kings were philosophers. How that may be I know not, but experience has shown that it is not well that philosophers should be kings. For the possession of intelligence is no proof of the possession of wisdom. The wise man does not speak. The scientist is immured in his laboratory, the student in his cell. Intelligence is loquacious, and ever seeks the limelight. Nor is it a proof of character. Nor is it any proof of executive ability. Therefore it has no claims to exercise power.

It is for this reason that while the intelligentsia prepares for revolutions it rarely profits by them. Intelligence may in certain circumstances shake the old authority into ruin. Power then passes into the hands of fierce narrow men, and "the Revolution has no need of chemists." Then the intelligentsia looks through the little national window, and sneezes into the common basket. When the new order is established the surviving intellectuals will be found, gorgeous in stars and crosses, proud of their fire-new patents of nobility, loyally serving the new executive chief.

Intelligence is in great demand nowadays, and intelligence is apt to be subversive. Subversives do not, of course, all write, act, preach, or design, but they are generally propagandists,

and it is really in the home circle, the school, or the circle of duller-witted friends that the subversive can more easily spread his doctrines. It will, however, be more convenient to consider the subversive intellectual as a writer, remembering always that the writer is not by any means the most important member of the class. The convinced and silent subversive, ambushed in some post of the administration, charged perhaps with the duty of defending the God of Things as They Are, a grinder, as he would say, in the mills of Ascalon, cannot display much energy or enthusiasm in his mercenary office. Yet it is on the faith and loyalty of its servants that the State, and the society of which the State is the representative, must ultimately depend for survival.

It is natural for the intelligentsia to be subversive. I read somewhere an account of the French intellectuals in the age preceding one of the revolutions. It ran (if I remember well) something like this: "The clever man is apt to have a grudge against society. He may have been unhappy as a child, educated in some austere and unimaginative household of the provinces. He may have found his brilliance not much appreciated at school, where some dull pedant dwelt rather on the necessity of industry and punctuality in preparing

pensums. Poor and at the same time dowered with a keen taste for pleasures, at his university he should have seen young men with not a tenth of his quickness enjoying life to the full, and casting away those opportunities for labour which he has bought at the price of so many and such severe humiliations. At the moment of his entering into the world he finds that the man with money, with the influence, has a start of about ten years over penniless brilliancy. As he rises he finds stolidity blocking every path. He finds also that the stupid, the lords of money-bags, the squat and pot-bellied householders extend to him a patronage which is not always of the most delicate. It is but natural that when he has arrived he should feel a fear of that great stupid animal on whose back he is so perilously perched, and which at any moment may cast him back into the gutter. But with fear there is always mingled a little hatred."

It is not that intelligence is always subversive. There have been and are now brilliant writers on the side of tradition and even of reaction. But it is the right and duty of intelligence to question, and the true answer to questions cannot be readily obtained. A brilliant young man mixing with other brilliant young men in the gay society now open to

him has little time for study. His cleverness is frittered away in small change. He picks up his facts from the daily press, from manuals, from articles in the magazines—that is, from secondary or tertiary sources, many of them tendentious. He has rarely undergone any severe mental training. His logic is sadly to seek. His critical power, except in matters of taste and style, is small. He accepts therefore evidence which is no evidence, and conclusions which do not follow from the premises. He is attracted to a doctrine by its novelty, or because it appeals to his emotions. He is thus the special prey of the sophist. Deceived himself by the leaden counter which some wily smasher has delivered to him, he coats it with tinfoil, makes it attractive, and thus passes it into wider circulation.

For, after all, brilliance must shine, or what is it? Moreover, it is necessary for a wit to eat, and he is too often dependent for his “bread and marge,” or at any rate for his jam, on attracting the immediate attention of the public. A striking paradox, a glittering sophism, will catch that attention as a bit of looking-glass attracts the black-buck. I am not speaking of mercenaries who write for hire, but all men have a tendency to believe what it pays them to believe. If subversivism



pays, men will believe in it. The ritual of the God of Things as They Are is necessarily abundant in platitudes. The coming gods have as yet no liturgy. Each man may address them in the style he thinks most acceptable, and may be as brilliant as he pleases. Copy-book morality is tedious. Copy-book morality inverted will always be certain of applause. There is a large public anxious to prove its modernity by acquaintanceship with subversive theories. Many can see the evils of society, and are genuinely anxious to trace them to their source. Even the stupid love to be shocked. The intelligentsia is naturally well-disposed to prophets of its own race and complexion.

Thus the subversive writer commands a large audience. He is not quite so popular as the writer of a good detective story, but he runs a neck-and-neck race with the purveyor of sentimental gush and sex-interest. There are thus many subversive writers. I speak of our own men, not of the permeation of society by Greeks, Jews, Slavs, or the like, who every day and in every way flock to the region where the big money is. We cannot hope to rival their nimbleness and dexterity, but among our men there is an extraordinary growth of intelligence. Reading some of the

literature of the present day, the bluff Briton, the veritable John Bull, is struck with admiring despair, feeling much as honest Ponto must feel when he observes the exploits of Bimbo and Bonzo, the Canine Wonders.

Intellect even in its errors creates. It is well to criticise. The reformer is useful, even the foolish reformer. The *Advocatus Diaboli* has often a good brief. But the rash intelligence that consciously or unconsciously shakes the very foundations of society is really doing an evil work. We live mostly by use and wont. It is impossible to give any rational explanation of why we do most of the things which we must do or die. The most vital actions can be made ridiculous and base if treated in a fitting manner. Some one said that the martyrdom of St Peter, "a bald-headed old Jew crucified upside," was screamingly funny. I doubt if the soldiers of the *Birkenhead* could have given any rational explanation of why they died in their ranks silent. Man himself must be to the angels a truly comic figure; and if you ask him what valid reason he can give for existing or continuing to exist, he can give no reasonable reply.

I admit it is very tempting. It must be such fun to attack society. Society, based as it is on egoism and stolidity, must be a great

provocation to the witty. Dull duties laboriously and conscientiously performed, particularly if performed with a bovine lack of comprehension of why and to what end, are fair game. To shock the belated Victorian, *épater le bourgeois*, is now the easiest way of showing cleverness, as in previous ages the surest means of winning the reputation of a spark of spirit was to disturb the domestic felicity of an alderman.

To take one instance. How absurd is the morality of the present day! It is the duty of children to be obedient to their parents. They should be industrious and tell the truth. As they grow up the girls should be modest and the boys manly. If the young man has no property of his own, he must work for his living, and he must do that industriously, honestly, and loyally. If he be rich he must make a good use of his wealth, and not squander even his income, far less his capital. A grown man should be a good citizen and obey the laws. In his dealings with his fellow-men he should be gentle, just, and candid, and not over-severe to press an advantage. He should marry, and be faithful and kind to his wife and kind to his children. He should do his best to provide for his children, and to equip them for the life of good citizens and honour-

able men and women. The duty of the girls is *mutatis mutandis* the same.

Any young man of intelligence can see how stuffy all this is, and how regardless of the Higher Morality. This, the morality of Polonius, is inconsistent with itself. Its sanctions are not apparent, or are cupidity and timidity. It cramps the energies, physical and intellectual, of the young. Its temple is the villa, and its Pantheon Kensal Green.

To leave the trim villa after a conjugal farewell flavoured with Hyson, to catch the nine-fifteen, to spend the day working for your salary or your profits, to return between six and eight with a parcel from the Stores and some toys for the children—we have excellent authority for saying that in this little epic lies the true pathos and sublime of human life. The cave-man or noble savage did and does not much more or less. The dweller in Manoa will not do so much. But to divine and express what there is of humanity and pathos in such lives, unperceived by those who live them, is not a task for mere intelligence.

Subversive criticism is amusing as a pastime, but too many people nowadays take it seriously. To me the sight of venerable heresies, which ought long ago to have retired to the club smoking-room, capering about with con-

genial companions on a belated Brocken, is interesting and diverting. How rejuvenating an elixir is genius ! But I fear that a great number of those who read the brilliant subversive writings of the present day are really seduced by them, so that they believe in verity that not this or that institution of our modern civilisation needs an overhaul, but that the ideas that lie behind these institutions and even behind the whole system are false.

I am not speaking of the inflammatory literature intended to awaken class hatred : I am referring to the seductive subversivism that makes people doubt. There was the same class of literature in the fifty years or so before the French Revolution. There the institutions of a society, corrupt enough no doubt, were compared with those of the noble savage or with the state of nature. Now the comparison is with those of some Utopia or some Manoa. The result of the efforts of the illuminated writers of the eighteenth century is clear to be seen. It is possible that the effects of our new philosophy may be visible hereafter. This philosophy teaches that all is rotten and not worthy of amendment, even if it were capable of being amended. It teaches that by the process of time or by violence all the present institutions will be abolished, and

that in their place will come or be set up worthier institutions corresponding to what the particular whim of the particular writer is. The subversive part of the teaching is clear; the constructional is intentionally or accidentally vague. Therefore there is in the minds of many not only doubt but a vague sort of feeling that if we could only destroy, the re-edification could take care of itself. Doubt is the death of kingdoms, and a desire to destroy, without a determination to build according to a definite plan, is a desire for revolution. As, then, subversivism in philosophy renders the social system more liable to attack from impatient idealists, so it renders the servants of the system mere mercenaries, and those who should be our defenders irresolute and doubtful of the justice of their cause. Thus we approach the state of mind which is known as Defeatism.



VII.

## DEFEATISM





## VII.

### DEFEATISM.

IT used to be called by another name, but the refined taste of modern days, which seeks above all things to spare our shrinking modesty, has here also found out a delicate synonym for an ugly thing. Yet perhaps it is well, for that old coarse word was applied indifferently to many mental states of very varying degrees of morbidity. It is more scientific and less conducive to confusion to confine "cowardice" to physical cowardice, and to apply the word Defeatism to all that which gives us the will to be vanquished. It is a barbarous word, but I suppose cesserience would be pedantic. It is not quite akedia.

The Defeatist is one who sees "a lion in the path," and thereon turns back and tries to induce his comrades also to turn back. The physical coward is, of course, a common instance. "Que faire, ils ont des canons?" But many men, the soul of honour and as

brave as their swords, are Defeatists. Admiral Byng was one, so perhaps was Bazaine, so in antiquity was Phocion. The judicial condemnation of all of these men has itself been condemned, but improperly. A chosen leader, who accepts command, has no right to be a Defeatist.

Defeatism is the symptom of a spiritual malady. This malady may be transient or chronic. A man may be born with this unhappy temperament, and in that case he rarely rids himself of it. It is, however, more frequently acquired, and in that case there are hopes for the patient. Defeatism has always been common. We find a strong Defeatist party among the children of Israel while wandering in the desert. Thersites is a memorable instance in the 'Iliad.' Nicias is an almost perfect example in the history of Athens. I do not remember any instance in the published records of Roman history, but they must have abounded in that city or the Senate would not have thanked Varro with such effusion for not having despaired of the republic. In our own happy land, the home of the British oak and the veritable bulldog, the Defeatist has been prevalent whenever occasion demanded. In the literature of the palmy days of the Virgin Queen (the true heroic age), some very fine productions of

Defeatism may be studied. In the days of Marlborough, Swift and the Tories were Defeatists. The Peace of Paris in 1763 was negotiated by a band of Defeatists, rightly horrified at their country's success in war. But the most suitable period for the student is that of the war of the American Revolution. By the way, to change the name of Rebellion to Revolution is an achievement of Defeatism. It is to concede the justice of the hostile cause.

It is, however, necessary to distinguish. The Defeatist is one who loves defeat for its own sake, and not for any temporal advantage to accrue to himself or his own faction from the triumph of the enemy. In the history of England faction was always so prevalent that men often wished that their country might be defeated merely in order to damnify those of the opposite faction. That is not true Defeatism. Some of the starkest fighters in the war which began in 1793 had been Defeatists in the war which began in 1775. Since those days we have had the rise of Liberalism and kindred ideas which make it difficult for the student to avoid error, for a Defeatist is not one who wishes to be defeated because he thinks it wrong to fight, but is one who wishes to be defeated because he does not think he can win.

The Defeatist is a tired man. Some are

born tired, and some become tired. As for the temperamental Defeatist, the science of eugenics has not progressed so far that we can account for him. I suppose he is often the child of old parents. The man who becomes a Defeatist becomes so as the result of various antecedent causes. I suppose every one would undergo this spiritual change if he knew defeat too often. A Defeatist thus may often be a hero who has lived too long. Such a phenomenon may be observed among those peoples who are exposed to continual predatory raids. Such a people will resist valiantly for many years, and then suddenly cease to resist at all. They are worn out. The principle of resistance gives way abruptly like an overstrained girder. But the majority of Defeatists have not been exposed to very cruel trials. One great shock, one great disillusionment, is enough in most cases to produce the condition.

It is not an agreeable condition. I can say that with confidence, because I know it well. The Defeatist says, and alas ! not always to himself : "The enemy is too strong for us. We cannot win. Let us make terms while we can still do so with dignity and honour. All the coming effusion of blood is quite useless, and the guilt of it will be on the heads of those who persist in a struggle hopeless from the

beginning, and now clearly so. True, we have had some successes, but if you look at them more narrowly you will see that they are not successes at all. They are much more like defeats, or at best illusive victories, the prelude to disaster. The resources of the enemy, his tenacity, his leadership, his marvellous ability make it quite certain that we must lose in the end. True, our cause is theoretically just, but the just cause is not always successful. Moreover, can we be quite certain that there is not a good deal to say on the opposite side? The Americans think this, and the Haitians think that; and what about the French and the Dutch? Public opinion that counts, I do not mean the effusions of the Jingo Press, is turning more and more against us. Let us treat now while we have still something to treat with, and can get good terms. Then we shall have time to recuperate, and our next struggle will be more successful. If we persist we shall be crushed for ever, and freedom will be for ever lost. Thus it is not only advantageous but morally obligatory to seek for Peace."

Then he uses those fine phrases which men use when they are about to commit a baseness. He talks about "humanity," and "religion," and "a higher duty," and "broader views,"

and "calm cool statesmanship," and what not. He is fond too of our dreadful political jargon, which enables him to conceal his real cravenness of spirit as a cuttlefish conceals its felonious body. It may be prudent to "explore avenues" (though the phrase is somewhat reminiscent of the proceedings of the Purity Patrol); but before you explore avenues it is well to be certain they are not filthy. To make "noble gestures" was a favourite device of Mr Pecksniff, and may be successful at due times and seasons, especially if made to those who are likely to be satisfied with gestures. But the noblest of all gestures would have been the broadside fired by the sinking *Vengeur* into the imaginary *Brunswick*. And the most fundamental of all gestures is the *bon coup de pied* administered on the appropriate part of the cashiered coward.

A Defeatist is by necessity a propagandist. He has uneasy fears that he may be considered a pariah, and wishes to assure himself of companionship. He has doubts as to the truth of his own views, and wishes to reassure himself by finding that others accept them, hoping by convincing others to convince himself. In times of calamity his propaganda is bound to win over many, because that is the time when fatigue is general. But that is the very time

when Defeatism is most dangerous. The ominous croakings of Grenville were laughed at in 1769. The ominous croakings of Burke destroyed an Empire in 1781. Defeatism has won its triumphs in many ages, but its most striking successes have been in the present, when a great and victorious Empire has made shameful surrender after shameful surrender to the puniest of foes, merely because those in power knew that vigorous action could win no support from a war-wearied and disillusioned people.

For, after all, disillusionment and disappointment are the parents of Defeatism. We have entered for the contest. The prize was there, and so dear and desirable, some crown, some cross, some ribbon, some girl, some reward, which then seemed the best in life. We have run the race, and the prize was not for us. Why run again and endure the ardours of a second contest for some inferior boon? Or worse, we have run the race and the prize is now ours, and the crown is only a few dried laurel leaves, the cross is only wood, the girl is only a girl. Since all things are a dream and the shadow of a dream, why contend for shadows? Or again, the caravan is setting out for its march under the stars over the desert to far lands, but its march is from nothing to annihilation, and it is better for us here on



the turf beneath the poplars, where the living waters flow, here with the favourite and the verses, and the cup of wine beside us. It is said that the world is divided into those who admire Marcus Aurelius and those who admire Omar Khayyam. If so, that is a bad look-out for humanity. One is the oracle of the prigs and the other of the Defeatists, but there are those whose strength is in the Lord of Hosts.

Defeatism is a dangerous toxin in the social body. It condemns the society poisoned with it to a rôle of passivity. It destroys the springs of action, and the community must now endure. That is, it must do what it is told, and submit to the will of others. Faith cannot perhaps by itself remove mountains, but it can shatter armies. Again and again, when all seemed lost, valorous men, firm in the confidence of the justice of their cause, firm in the belief that right must somehow win, have seen truth come and falsehood vanish away. But if this was not granted them they have at least had the joys of conflict, and perish, if they must perish, knowing that a cause which goes down fighting is not always for ever lost. The men of Thermopylae and the men of Marathon alike with their blood watered a plant which can never die. For victory or defeat is assigned to the valiant by the will of the immortal gods,

but the immortal gods themselves cannot give victory to him who desires it not.

As I have said before, Defeatism of a kind has always been encouraged in England, because it has become associated with noble things, religion and humanity. The great Liberal leaders of the last century were not Defeatists in the true sense. They were great chiefs, and the chosen leaders of a great nation. But they were the heads of factions, and the strength of those factions lay in men who believed that it was on moral or religious grounds wrong to fight, or at least to fight so far that complete victory was possible. There is also in English public life a love for compromise, a moderation, a shrinking from the extreme, which, excellent in itself, partakes of the nature of Defeatism. Thus true Defeatism, when it did come, came to a world which was not unprepared to receive it. But though many, indeed most, questions can be settled by compromise, a few cannot. Invasion by a foreign foe is one ; Communism is another.

It is in a tired and disillusioned community that Defeatism spreads with most rapidity. England of the nineteenth century was not a tired and disillusioned community. Now perhaps it is, and with some reason. The worldly hopes men set their hearts upon during

the last two hundred years seem mostly to have been vain hopes. Liberty seemed to mean nothing but the liberty of the strong to devour the weak, or at best the liberty of a captive to impose his own chains. Man, the deified man, who freed of his shackles was to march with raised head and earnest eyes towards some radiant future, marched only to the shambles. The torch of Reason proved after all to be the torch of the pétroleuse. Science, which was to be a guide and an instructor, leading Man from the depths of hell to the ante-chamber of Paradise, led him, it is true, but to the clearing-house and the base hospital. Religion was but an empty name, for God was not even an efficient policeman. Man was still, as he was under the Pharoahs, a slave, not now of human task-masters, but of cold and inexorable forces, ruthless as no Legree was ever ruthless. Such seemed the answer (not, I think, a true answer) given by the war to the radiant hopes of the revolutionary period. But men still hoped. Then came the peace.

It is natural, therefore, that there should be now visible the same langour and despair that we see at the beginning of other great revolutions. There have been again and again epochs when after a frantic and protracted conflict men have lost hope. Their wisdom is turned

into folly, their victories have no laurels. To stand still and to go forward seems alike impossible. There is no retreat. Whatever is done, whatever is neglected, the result is the same—nothing. In such a epoch all except the bravest lose heart. Here is the nidus of Defeatism.

There is this to be observed, that Defeatism, when it exists, is generally found to depress the energies of the nation universally. That is not, however, the case in modern England. It is only in political matters that there appears despair and the will to be vanquished. The sons of Zeruah are too hard for us in the senate and the council-chamber; they are not so in fields where other and perhaps more vital conflicts are waged. I suspect, therefore, that political Defeatism is but a very transient evil, and that the same virile energy, which is repairing the material losses of the war, will ere long make itself apparent in the fields of politics and of social endeavour. Meantime Defeatism is undoubtedly an evil, and must, if it endure, prepare for reception of subversive doctrines.

Defeatism is incompatible with evolutionary Communism. The city of the Communistic State must be resonant with hope and idealism. Up to the present, man has worked only when

compelled by the threat of the whip or the threat of starvation. When so compelled to labour, he has no doubt often and without compulsion given of his best for mere joy and pride in his craftsmanship. But it is found that where men are not compelled to labour, they will not labour at distasteful or even monotonous tasks. But a great deal of labour, even in the Communistic State, must necessarily be disagreeable and monotonous. The spur of starvation cannot be applied. The use of the whip cannot produce the necessary supply of efficient labour, and if too generally invoked would have unpleasant consequences. Therefore the community must depend on the growth of social sense in man, so that men will work hard for the mere love of the community, as the bees and ants now do. Man has not the social instinct of the bees and ants; and if his instincts are to be changed he must be remodelled physically—that is to say, he must cease to be man. That way evolution does not lead, but there is undoubtedly in man a germ of a social sense which might develop by process of evolution. When his social sense was so developed, man would so idealise and idolise the community that his feeling towards it would be continually of the same kind, though far greater in degree, as that which he now

spasmodically feels towards those other ideas, his family, his faction, or his country. There would be no place in the Communistic Manoa for a gloomy pessimist, haunted with perpetual fears of the debacle, with no faith in man or his destinies—one, in fact, who believed that the destruction of the community was perpetually at hand. It is useless to shift the sails, to labour at the pumps, to caulk the seams, when the brig is manifestly sinking beneath our feet. Better break into the spirit-room and seek a few minutes of joy and ultimate oblivion. The Defeatist would die of ennui in the Communistic State. For men will not live without hope, and there, as there is no peril, so there is no hope, except hope for the society. If he did not die of ennui, he would after due inquiry be consigned to the lethal chamber as a greater menace to the society than a consumptive.

But as regards the preparation of existing society for the reception of subversivism his utility is certain. I do not speak of the possibility of a Defeatist nation making some great cession of rights, territories, and possessions, which might lead to the loss of the command of the trade-routes, and thus to the sudden destruction of the industrial system: I am at present dealing merely with primary effects.

As I have said, there is no danger to us from evolutionary Communism; the danger is from an outbreak of impatient idealists, who see the need pressing and the remedy delayed. Defeatism may, in extreme cases, so paralyse the will-power of the nation that a small band of energetic men may, without resistance, seize the executive Government. There is small chance of that in England. It took place both in Hungary and Russia, but the Russians and Hungarians had undergone a strain too great for human endurance. Neither in Germany nor Italy, stricken as they were—one by defeat and one by victory, though Defeatism was for a time epidemic in both countries—was there any real chance of the nation's waking up one fine morning finding a Communistic Government installed, and accepting with apathetic resignation the dictatorship of the Proletariat. We should have to go a great many steps farther before we reached that point. But Defeatism, with its depressive effect on national energies, is indubitably rendering the social problem more difficult. It is impossible to have a partially sound body. It is impossible to have a partially sound community. The morbid matter must be expelled, or the whole organism must be tainted. Defeatism must then, if it persists, ultimately lead to a general

relaxation of national effort in all directions, leading in its turn to greater unemployment and misery and a growing sense of insecurity. Thus it aggravates the social ills which may lead to a revolution, and at the same time renders the community less able to resist subversive influences.





VIII.

UNFAITH



## VIII.

### UNFAITH.

“BELIEF in God and the Last Day,” as the Moslems call it, is now obsolete—that is to say, revelation is discredited. The God of the Deists also sleeps with his fathers. Belief in the Deity (if there is any belief in any Deity) is the belief in some inscrutable unqualifiable force which is observed to create and develop. The optimist thinks that this force is beneficently working towards some good end. The pessimist says that it is not possible to assert even that, and that the force, if it exists, is impersonal, omnipotent, and blind.

It might be expected, therefore, that there would be necessarily a decrease among us of a sense of personal responsibility; but that would be a conclusion that did not necessarily follow from the observed facts. Man is not a consistent animal. *A priori* it might be expected that he who felt himself the sport of a mighty and inexplicable unmoral power would

feel that he was responsible to himself only, because nothing that he himself did or thought could in any way affect the progress of events. Actually, however, this does not follow. Many a strict believer in predestination, equally the subject of a fixed decree—a decree not to be changed on account of any merit or demerit of the subject—has, in fact, a stronger sense of personal responsibility than many a Pelagian. It does not, therefore, by any means necessarily follow because Atheism (as the modern belief is rightly called) is widespread that therefore the modern man is lacking in a sense of individual responsibility.

Disbelief is, therefore, not a cause of what may be called immorality, but it may be a consequence. Man is always a maker of idols, either with hand or brain. What he loves he symbolises. That is the meaning of a king, of a flag, of an anthem. If he has a strong sense of right and wrong, if he feels in short that he owes a duty not to himself but to something external to himself, he will symbolise that thing to which he is so bound. The abstract is too elusive for us; we must have that which we can reach and touch with hand or brain. If, then, we find a community where there are no idols, we find a community whose moral sense is deficient. In such a community the

citizen does not worship at all, because he does not need to worship, and he does not need to worship because he feels nothing within him that bids him obey. Those, therefore, who deplore the lack of faith are in a way right. But the remedy to which they point is not the true remedy. No one can believe merely because it would be a good thing if he did. To pretend belief, and so to hypnotise yourself into some simulacrum of belief, would be to add a further symptom to the disease. What is needed is not faith in this God or in that, but a desire to worship. When two or three are gathered in His name, the God will not be long absent.

For true Communism to succeed, man must be not only an adorer but a fanatic. He must make to himself a God—the community—and must worship it with all his body, all his mind, all his will, and all his soul. He must not be a cold calculator weighing this quantum of advantage against this quantum of loss, and striking the balance to decide whether he shall or shall not do a particular action. He must jump to the word of command, as a smart soldier does, by a sort of reflex action, in this case the will of the community being the word of command.

In our present age men have called on many

idols, but they do not, I think, serve them very loyally. Yet many of them were in their day fine idols enough, and were served as true gods are served, for on their altars was poured out much blood. Humanity? The Faith? Liberty? The People? All of them are gone the way of Baal and Ashtoreth into the darkness of dead gods. From hell none of them could deliver their souls. True, they still live for the purposes of rhetoric, as Apollo and the Nymphs flitted through the graceful mazes of the eighteenth-century pastoral. An act is therefore now wrong merely because we feel it instinctively to be wrong, and not because it is contrary to any extrinsic command. To the true Communist the idea of Communism is, of course, a very god, which speaks with authentic command to the moral sense of man, but we individualists have at the moment no god to set against a Deity whose kingdom is assuredly not of this world. Men will no doubt again find a thing to love, but at present we have not even an efficient mascot. Therefore the moral sense is clearly relaxed. But the moral sense is only that instinct which bids us sacrifice our own interests for the interests of the community. Thus a godless community is necessarily a decadent community, and a decadent community is a community liable to

revolution, and, moreover, one which is moving farther and farther away from Manoa.

That the moral sense is relaxed and that man has an uneasy consciousness of his loss appears from many other signs. I do not speak of some of those truly shocking crimes of violence which have recently been so plentiful. There have always been monsters, and they were relatively as numerous in the days of faith as they are now. The difference is that now such crimes come to light, and are brought to the knowledge of all. Moreover, a crime of violence is not necessarily a very unsocial crime. I read of a lady, a resident in a convict settlement, who always selected murderers as her house-boys because they were so good with the children. Nor do I speak of the great number of instances of sexual immorality with which the Sunday papers make us so familiar. Sexual irregularity is common in all communities, and is not necessarily connected with social decadence. In the case of that sin, it is the robustness or effeminacy of the sentiment which is to be considered, and we are still far from Louvet and Rétif de la Bretonne. But perfidy is a very symptomatic sin. It is the sin of a weak and slavish nature. The self-satisfied Briton is apt to make a mistake about the meaning of the expressions "*parole d'An-*



glais," "lafz angrezi," and the like. They did not necessarily mean that the word of an Englishman was inviolable; they often meant that an Englishman was too arrogant to bargain. Still perfidy was not an English vice. The Elizabethan used to regard with envious wonder the performances in this line of the renaissance Italian. We have certainly had in private life from time to time great amateurs of this art, and, of course, politicians are by the necessity of the case almost always perfidious; but the English traitor was after all rare, and showed a clumsiness in his technique which indicated that the art that he practised was not a domestic art. I may be wrong, but it does look to me as if perfidy is more common than it was. People do, I think, lie with greater facility and less awkwardness than they did. There is good hope that in time we may rival the exploits of the hungry Greekling, the Roman of the fifth century, the Italian of the Renaissance, and the modern Oriental—citizens all of them, be it noted, of decadent societies. In such societies it often occurs that some particularly startling case is on record to which the instinct of mankind points as typical. We judge of the profound decadence of society in the first century before Christ by the story of Oppianicus of Larinum, of that of pre-

revolution France by the affair of the collar ; and it is possible that the historian of this age may draw the same deduction from the case of Harising.

Fraud and corruption are offences of the same kind. They are certainly found in all societies, but, like all sins into which enters the element of deceit, they are the proper vices of the slavish. They are then, when they abound and are tolerated, one of the signs of a decadent society. There have been in all ages, as in this age, some great offenders in this way, and I suppose the petty offender was always common. But they were always reprobated. In the present age such a one is not reprobated : he is admired, and his example is proposed as a model. Sabotage and the policy of *ca' canny* are after all fraud and perfidy, just as much as the exploits of the swindling grocer, the political concessionaire, or the profiteer.

Thrift is certainly a somewhat uncomely virtue. Still it was a virtue, and one profitable to the community. The less that is consumed by the individual, the more there is for others. To learn to abstain, to learn to postpone a present gratification, to learn what power he has who desires nothing save that which he can give himself, this is an imperial education.

Thrift is a virtue proper to strong natures. For the slave there is nothing between the enforced penury of the barracoon and the heady licence of the Saturnalia. It is, moreover, in a decadent society that extravagance most flourishes. Decadent societies are ever haunted by the fear of dissolution. To what end then to save, to what end to deny this dear and doomed body its meed of joy? It would be cruel to refuse to Jack Sheppard his half-way bowl of bishop.

England was never noted for thrift, but few ages have seen such profligate and general extravagance as ours. As it is the symptom, so it is the cause of a relaxed morality. We call it the assertion of the right to enjoy. It is in effect an assertion of the right to make others suffer. It is therefore highly unsocial, and being so is highly immoral. It is the nursing mother of countless sins. Yet it is praised, and its rivals contemned.

One might pursue this subject further, but it is unnecessary. The examples given may suffice. Crimes exist in all communities, even the most robust. But in a robust community the prevalent crimes will be the crimes of free men. In a decadent community the crimes will be those of slaves.

There is a change also in the way in which

people look at sins. It may be that their real feelings are as they should be, and that they are merely trying to make themselves out clever and free from prejudice, but I do observe something like a general condonation of sin by public opinion. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner* is a reminder to a God and not to man. Man may well pardon offences against himself, but there is always the risk that he who is too sudden to pardon the offences of another against a third person may be rather too prompt to pardon, in anticipation, his own offences. Mr Podsnap, whose "gorge rose" at the slightest reference to iniquity, was a stolid and ridiculous old fellow enough, but there is something to be said for Podsnappery. It is in some ways an advantage to be too dull to see the real charm of vice. There is also to be considered the effect on the young and impressionable of the continual laudation of great sinners. Mr Fairchild used to take little Harry out for a nice Sunday walk to see the murderer hanging in chains, in order that young hopeful might learn to control his temper. The moral lesson was somewhat harsh, but I dare say Harry profited by it. I am sure at least that he would not have profited by being told that the murderer was a man of generous and impulsive nature, deeply wronged,

and obeying a higher law than that of his country.

I may perhaps digress here to consider the question of instruction of the young. We have all been reading about Dayton in Tennessee. There has been a great deal of very clever writing about Scopes and Bryan and Darwin and monkeys and Fundamentalism, and the Lord only knows what! but it was wholly irrelevant. The questions at issue were two. First, had the culprit broken his contract and the law of the land? Secondly, if a man break the law, is he, when on trial, entitled to a verdict of not guilty because he thought the law a bad law? But, of course, you could not get a very amusing column out of that. If it were permissible to look further, would it wholly be out of place to ask whether, assuming the first chapter of Genesis to be a nursery tale, the nursery is not a proper place for nursery tales? "Suffer little children to come unto Me," said One who, whatever He may or may not have been, was at least a great teacher. What did He mean to do with them when they came? Read them Aristotle's 'Ethics'? I think He would rather have told them some charming fairy tale. Such at least was His habit with those of riper years; for what is a parable but a fairy tale? Truth,

even when we find it, is no light load. These little hands are not very strong to hold ; these slender shoulders are not apt for heavy burdens ; the gay, bright, shallow stream which is the mind of a child cannot carry great argosies. And what is truth ? I would wager that the 'Iliad' and Shakespeare have taught more truth than all the philosophers from Heraclitus to Freud.

However this may be, I am sure that the mean and puny sins of the present day and the toleration, if not admiration, with which they are regarded is a very certain sign of a decadent society. There is also, I think, an uneasy feeling abroad that after all there must be some extraneous support for morality. It is for that reason, I take it, that the power of the State is so constantly invoked. But fear of the State, fear of the commands of unmoral power, can never strengthen morality. It is not to the fear of the State, it is to the love of the State that the true Communist appeals. It is love and not fear that is the mother of virtue.

Yet all this may well be transitory. These clouds *sufflavit deus et dissipantur*. So it has been many a time, and so it may well be again. To us the so-called eighteenth century seems a dull and prosaic era. Those who look more

closely know that during those years from 1690 to 1793 there was indeed waged a close-knit varying struggle between disruptive and evolutionary forces. Again and again it seemed as if the State must perish. Periods of lassitude and despair succeeded rapidly, and were rapidly succeeded by periods of superb energy, and of that hope which always fulfils its own promises. Who would have seen in the England of William the England of Anne? What auguries did Walpole give of Chatham? Who could have deduced Saratoga from Quebec or the Chesapeake from Quiberon? Who could have seen in the England of Newcastle the England of North, that England who under Pitt saved herself by her own efforts and Europe by her example? In the things of the flesh, such was the history of England; but as for the things of the spirit, the true historian would tell the tale of a people who found their old gods dead, indeed, and the old light spent. They wandered in the thick darkness, and their wanderings led them nowhere. Then there was again light, and they made to themselves new gods.

So it has been before, and so it may be again. But these things are not dependent on our own will. If it is desired that the citadel should be held, then the garrison will be provided; but if

not, not. But how if the garrison feels itself isolated and wholly abandoned ?

It is not truly relevant to my inquiry, but it might be of interest to consider the effects of the decay of the Churches on the advance of the Communistic idea and the attacks of subversivism.

Christianity in its primitive form is not, I think, opposed to Communism. There is indeed nothing in the teachings of the Gospels which condemns private property. St Paul does not attack even the most odious form of property, the property in man of man. But it may well be argued that private property, though not condemned, is yet, like slavery and polygamy, also not directly condemned, contrary to the idea of Christianity. It would appear that the very first Churches were organised on a somewhat Communistic basis, the Church thus resembling the *sussitia*. The Established Churches have always approved of property, and for reason, for they were themselves property holders from the time when some unknown genius organised the first Christian "burial club." The decay of the Churches, therefore, does take away a powerful support to the system of individualistic property, depriving it of any moral sanction and making it a mere question of expedience. Most of the Churches



are extremely decayed, for, as Swift long ago pointed out, one of the inconveniences of the abolition of Christianity is the danger to the Church. Moreover, many of the schismatic Churches have for historical reasons become not unfriendly to subversive teachings. The Church of Rome is, however, still very strong, and that Church, however much she may comply with the times, must always in the end be anti-Communist, because in that system the place assigned to the State is one wholly incompatible with the existence of the Church. It has therefore always seemed to me probable that there are in fact only two ways: the way that leads to Manoa, and the road that leads to the rock of Peter. To me personally neither road seems very attractive, but then I shall not for long travel on any road.

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IX.

HATRED



## IX.

### HATRED.

It is natural for man to love his fellow-man, but to keep his club handy. In Manoa the club will be laid aside, because there man will have small occasion to hate his fellow-man.

Hate is in general the cause or the effect of acts of egoism, and there can in the Communist system be no egoist. Manoa being still afar, shall we bring it any nearer by hatred? I do not know that that is psychologically possible. A noble hatred may clear away the evil, and thus discharge itself. Such was the hatred of the great Puritans towards oppression. They slew the armed oppressor, but when the assistance of God had come and the victory, they remembered that the vanquished was now vanquished and still their fellow-man. Such was the hatred of the great Liberals towards the things that clung and fettered. It is for this reason that the garment of Revolution in England has been spotted

indeed, but not dyed with civil blood. But hatred, even noble hatred, cannot create. That is the work of other energies.

But the hatred that is now invoked in England is not that noble hatred. It is a hatred not of the thing, not of the hostile idea, but of the minister, even the unconscious minister of the hostile idea. It is a hatred by the victims not of that that makes them suffer, or of the servants of that oppression, but of their fellow-victims also, merely because these suffer less. This is the hatred of the *ergastulum* against the free man and the house-boy. It is in spite, not because, of that passion that revolutions bring healing. Those therefore who are now working for class hatred are working against meliorative evolution, and even against a benign revolution. They are working not for Communism but for the Commune.

Hatred, and particularly class hatred, is a new element in our modern political life. Party is no doubt faction, and factions have hated one another furiously in England as elsewhere. There have been sad times when even in England class seemed set against class. But for the most part the political parties have not coincided with social divisions, and the parties, being rotative, were not irreconcilable.

The system of rotative parties is a system

whereby the heads of the parties understand each other, and therefore do not press things to extremes. It is generally known that however vigorous the party now in power may be, yet a time will come when the country will tire of it, when in fact it will become senile, and that its successors in rule will necessarily be members of the other party. In such a system there cannot be much fierce feeling either for reform or for reaction, because the day of power being short, the day of reckoning is near at hand. Nor will he subvert who hopes to enjoy. Nor in such a system would it be wise for the Tweedledums, now in power, to outlaw the Tweedledees, now in opposition, because that is a game at which two can play. The affairs of England have been conducted under this system for about two hundred years, for the rage against Walpole was the last time that any serious attempt was made to shed the blood of a fallen statesman. Its merits are obvious. It has made faction, which is generally a danger to the State, an implement of dominion. It has prevented the reign of the extremist. It has secured that reforms, though perhaps they came late, came indeed, but came only when all thinking men were convinced of their necessity. While it gave an air of unreality to political struggles which

sometimes disgusted the earnest, and still more him whose soul burned within him, it helped the process of civic evolution.

But the whole system depends for its success on the division of the citizens into two, and not more than two, great parties, for if there were more great parties than two it would be possible for a combination of two or more to keep one out of office permanently. In that case the excluded party, knowing that it could not come to power by constitutional means, might, if it contained earnest fanatics or impatient idealists, attempt to come to power by force. In order to come to power by force it is necessary to have an army, and an army cannot be had from volunteers except by depicting the cause as a crusade against wicked men. If, then, there should be a party not likely to come to office by regular means, which party was also a class, we might expect that among those in power there would be the attempt to fire the zeal of their supporters, and to win over from other parties those who are tired of slow constitutional methods, as well as those who are always ready for conflict, by appeals not to reason but to primitive passions. We might expect then that a Communist party, which at present has no chance of coming into real power in England, despairing

of seeing its ideals realised until it does come into office, and doubtful whether the trend of constitutional evolution is in its favour, might appeal to that most dangerous of all political emotions—that is, to class hatred. The case of the Irish Home Rule party may here be considered. And in fact I do not see that it would be very possible to work the constitution even with two parties if these parties represented irreconcilable interests. I do not see that the rotative system would there be in place. That system postulates agreement in fundamentals, divergence on details between the parties. It is possible that the ship of State might continue to sail, when for one watch it was steered towards the St Lawrence, and during the next towards the Chesapeake. I suppose it would arrive at New York—not a bad port. But how if the officer of the coming watch was suspected of a desire to scuttle the ship? Would the officer now in charge hand over with a cheery good-night and go below to don his patent waistcoat? If one political party contained all the wealthy and the other all the disinherited, and if it were established that the interests of the two classes were wholly opposite to each other, would the dominant party, whichever it might be, allow itself to be dispossessed by the chance of the



ballot-box? If it did not, the present constitutional system would break down; the factions would be true factions and factions representing classes, and it is when the State is divided into true factions, which cannot obtain or retain power except by force, that there is revolution. He then who is trying to set up factions of rich against poor, proletarian against bourgeois, and to that end stirring up class hatred, is in truth working for a revolution, and for the coming not of Manoa but of an odious tyranny, whether his policy succeeds or fails.

This new teaching is now perambulatory about England. It is probable that in normal times it does not do much harm. It has a strange, awkward, foreign air about it. It has very suspect origins and relations. Perhaps it is a pity to teach children to hate, but we have been teaching them to love for nearly two thousand years, and have not succeeded very well so far. It is probable, therefore, that the Communist Hymn of Hate will not be more potent than the Sermon on the Mount, or the Socialist Sunday School more successful than the vicar's Sunday School. The time when such teaching to grown men is really dangerous is when there is actual privation. The belly may have no ears, but he whose belly is empty

has, and very quick ears. Who can doubt that the outbreaks of popular force which brought the crazy old French régime down in ruins were due not so much to subversive teaching as to the disastrous English commercial treaty and the scarcity of corn caused by the seasons, or ill-advised administrative measures? Misery is not yet permanently domiciled in England. There are, however, other teachers at work. It may seem trivial to mention the circumstance, but I think the motor-car has done more to cause ill-feeling between the rich and the poor than all the paid propaganda of Moscow. I myself, when by means of a frenzied leap I have reached the ditch and lie grovelling in that ignominious security, would gladly and with my own hands disembowel the goggled assassins who are now, like their forefathers, disappearing in a pillar of dust. But then I have my turn. I, too, though rarely, all too rarely, see the aged and meditative rambler in the golden haze of a Sussex highway leaping into new and vigorous life and years not his own as I dart upon him howling from a secret by-lane. Turn and turn about is only fair, and staunches many wounds. But the millions are always the crushed and hunted, never in their turn the Juggernaut, the Nimrod. Townsfolk envy the children of

cottages because they have the whole of the wide open spaces in which to play. As a matter of fact, the country child is most rigorously confined to the roads. These are his only playground, and that playground is now infested by monsters more swift than eagles, more pitiless than panthers. Corydon and Phyllis are liable to a very summary interruption of their Arcadian courtship. Old Philemon, feebly tottering towards the well-known "Coach and Horses," feels an uneasy consciousness that he is defrauding his burial club. Rumbold did not believe that "a few men were born booted and spurred, and the millions were born saddled." In this he was very likely in error. But it does seem contrary to probability that the millions were born to be macadam to the millionaire.

To a less degree the picture palace with its film, often mildly subversive and by preference depicting the extravagance and luxury of "the idle rich," and the picture papers, with their perpetual representation of what "pleasures" are provided by the present social system for the wealthy only and thus denied to the millions, must to a certain extent raise a spirit of envy in the minds of those who would like some of the jam too. Envy is not far from hatred.

Man is not naturally very envious and malicious. He accepts established privilege if it is not very odious. He regrets that he does not share it, but does not hate the owner. The novelist may wonder why he is not a Wells or a Bennett, and may attribute his comparative lack of popularity to himself, or more probably to his publisher or agent or the folly of the public, but he would not wish to extirpate either of those authors. Lucy Brown would like to be Lady Hermione, but does not hate that young person. Rather she reads with pleasure of the social exploits of "our charming debutante," and vicariously enjoys the triumphs of her sex. But man has a strong sense of justice, and if he thinks that he is unhappy and that others are happy because the balance is unfairly weighed against him, then he will hate, and very bitterly. Against noxious and illegitimate privilege, unfairly obtained and fraudulently retained, there will always be resentment. In the privileges of a noblesse, such as they are, none can share; but those privileges are not now noxious to the unprivileged. From the privileges of a nobility, like that of England, none are necessarily excluded; the race is open to all. Those privileges are not noxious, and should they prove to be so they can at the mere nod of the

unprivileged be abolished. To the privileges of learning and genius none can aspire save the few, but those privileges are not noxious. The privilege of beauty, who would resent? But the privilege of wealth? This privilege is capable of being represented in a very odious light, and as it is the most powerful because it does not seem to exist (for in the eye of the law the rich man is no more than his valet), so, inasmuch as that power is actually above all laws, it is the most noxious. I do not wish to turn this book into a subversivist manual, and I shall therefore not expatiate on this subject; but I merely observe that this privilege is often held by those unworthy of it, is often oppressively obtained, and is often not consistent with good government. If this be so, then it is natural that the poor man, feeling the maleficent effect of this new aristocracy of wealth, and being told that that privilege is conferred and maintained by a conspiracy among the cunning and determined to exploit the only producer, himself, may think it right to hate the rich, and not the rich only, but all those who regard the rich as their leaders, and on whom the rich draw for their agents and parasites. In such a case envy would appear noble scorn, cupidity a desire for restitution, vindictiveness a thirst for justice. It is

to these feelings that the sowers of class hatred appeal. How far this appeal has been successful I do not know ; I think it is not yet heard with much favour ; but perhaps in some season of calamity it may be remembered.

Wealth is unequally divided in England. The wage-earning class is as a whole sharply marked off from the classes subsisting on salary and profits, as from the owners of property, by many differences in appearance, habits of life, speech, education, and even in dress. Some of the old links that bound man and man together are gone. The social hierarchy in England lacks one great order—the peasant, propertied and poor. The social system lacks one great leveller—conscription. *A priori*, one would think that England was the one country in the world where the solidarity of the proletariat would be preached with most effect, and where it would be attended with most danger. So far the effect has been little, and the danger has been avoided ; but will it always be so ?

The preachers of this new learning forget what a small country is England, and how exceptional are its conditions. There are a few felons who hope, by arming Englishman against Englishman, to throw open a mighty treasure to spoliation. The majority of those

who preach, and all those who believe, are still loyal Englishmen, who hope to make England a better place for their own class in the first place, and for all in the next. They are in error. In my judgment it is only by close co-operation among all classes that the mere existence of the country can be preserved. There are fearful perils to the State ever growing at home and abroad. Is this a time for preaching class hatred? For it must be remembered that fear begets fear and hatred hatred, and that those who are menaced think self-defence lawful. Thus the Red Peril will call for the White Terror, and Nîmes is a long way from Manoa.

The solidarity of Labour sounds well, but what about the solidarity of Capital? The propertied classes are now citizens first and capitalists afterwards. There is as yet no party of Capital. But if those who are now working to that end succeed in dividing England into two hostile camps, there will, in answer to the combination of Labour, come into existence the combination of Capital. If these parties are brought into actual conflict, and the party of Labour clearly designs the extirpation of their enemies, then there will be a conflict without truce. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat? Perhaps. But just as

probably the Saviour of Society and the Dictatorship of the Capitalist. Then the victors will say to the vanquished: "You have fought and lost. To us the spoils. For us the profit, and for you the labour. Back to your slums, and breed that we may have more slaves. If you agitate, you will be punished; if you kill, you will be hanged; if you rebel, you will be shot. This is the law and the gospel."

Such is a possible consequence of the teaching of those who wish to dissolve the old political parties and to turn class against class. Of the two I should prefer the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It would not last so long; but in fact neither would lead to the permanent good of the State. This kind of civil war may not be so noxious in backward countries like Russia, India, or China, but even there its effects are not very salutary. In our highly organised and complex society it would mean sudden death.





X.

DANEGELD



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X.

DANE GELD.

THE felon in the condemned hole, alone with his crime, must often have gone over again and again wearily the path which had led him thither. He would always be able to say: "At this point the road definitely branched off. Up to that time it might not have happened; afterwards it was irrevocable." So I think in great revolutions. Looking back we may always detect the emergence of a question the answer to which meant in one case ruin, and in the other salvation. In some cases it was patent to contemporaries that the question was a grave question, in others it appeared the merest triviality; but its full meaning was never at the time perceived. I dare say the legislation about the theoric fund passed by an unanimous vote in a scanty ecclesia, but in the permanent mortgage of the peace revenue of Athens lay Chaeronea and the modern world. The vote of the tribes that deposed

Octavius the Tribune decreed also Julius, the Empire, and the modern world. The minor administrative act of Louis XVI. in re-establishing the Parliaments made the Revolution, and hence the modern world, inevitable. I do not, of course, say that had Eubulus, Gracchus, and Maurepas never lived, the same Revolution would not have occurred; but inspection of each of these incidents will make it clear both how the Revolution became necessary and why it was inevitable.

It is possible that the future historian of England may see in a certain incident—an incident certainly regarded as serious enough by all thinking men, but the full importance of which is, I think, not yet understood—a cause and justification of the Revolution. I may be wrong. This may not be the veritable branching of the ways, but in that case the moment of decision is merely postponed, and it will do us no harm at least to try our judgment.

Trades Unionism has just won a notable victory. The coal-miners have by menaces compelled the Government to grant a subvention, in consideration of which the collieries will be bound to pay to their labourers an uneconomic rate of wages. It is hoped that this will form a precedent for the dotation at

State expense of other moribund industries, and thus will be but the prelude of nationalisation. This is claimed as a great victory for Communism. It is necessary therefore to examine the demand, and in particular the Communistic nature of the success, in the light of general principles. Thus by dissection of the living subject can be established or refuted the truth of theories.

I must postulate that there were no other causes which moved the Government to this surrender than what are patent. There was, I suppose, no delicate web of international finance whose meshes might be broken by economic war ; there was, I suppose, no menace of foreign war ; nor was the threatened general strike merely sought as an occasion for domestic war. If these suppositions are incorrect, and there were some occult reasons for this surrender, then some of what I say will be erroneous, and I apologise in anticipation.

I admit also that the question in this case is one in which economics cannot have the last word. The coal-miner carries on a key industry. Coal is the bread of life to all our industries and all our defence. On it therefore depends the very existence both of the community and of each individual. A key industry applied, whether to the production of coal or

the production of wheat or of any other wholly indispensable commodity, can with perfect propriety claim the support of the State if due cause is shown. In that case the way in which this support is to be given is a mere question of detail. Still after all deductions and allowances are made, the incident now under consideration does merit serious study.

Stripped of all confusing details, what happened was that a certain number of citizens banding together compelled the Government, in its capacity of trustees for the whole community, to extract from the pockets of all the citizens (including those of the future beneficiaries) a sum of ten or twenty millions, to be distributed to the demandants as a donative in excess of their economic wages. They compelled this payment by menaces. No one can blame the miners, individualistic to the core, for combining to sell their commodity (labour) at as high a rate as possible. That is a virtue in a competitive age. I respect these men very much. I could wish that all the citizens had shown a power of co-operation and a hardihood equal to theirs. I regret that I am not a member of an organisation which could in the same way put pressure on society for my individual benefit. But I cannot see that there is anything altruistic in the affair,

or anything that would be tolerated in Manoa. Combinations of citizens to extort wealth from a weak Government, or from wealthy and timid individuals, have at various times in history been common; but they have not been admired, at any rate by the victims. Romance has indeed shed a colour over the Pretorians and the merry men of Robin Hood, but I expect they were but sorry rascals.

But it is said that the industry was so vital an industry, and yet was reduced to such a condition that, had it not been for the subvention, half of the mines would have closed down, numbers of the miners would have turned to other employments or emigrated, and the remainder would have been reduced to starvation wages. Hence a key industry would have perished. I verily believe this to be much exaggerated. The distress in the coal industry is due to the diminution of foreign export. The interest of the State does not require that English coal should be sent to foreign markets. Thus the strongest advocate for protection of agriculture never desired that British wheat should be put on the markets of Chicago and Amritsar.

But even if the claim be true or partially true, that does not make it any the more admissible that a subvention should be granted



to menaces ; for no man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause. But according to this system it is those workmen only whose union is powerful, and whose commodities are urgently needed, that can be trusted to ascertain whether they merit a subvention, and to fix their own rate of wages. Others not so fortunately situated cannot so be trusted. Merit, need, indispensability, providence, industry—these are irrelevant. He who is a member of a powerful union shall receive ; he who is not shall pay. For the money which is paid to the miners does not drop from heaven. It is exacted from the pockets of the whole community. If more be given to some, less remains for the others. A proportion of every pot of beer, of every loaf of bread consumed by the miner, is now contributed by the penury as well as the riches of the citizen. Just so, and not otherwise, we are told, do the capitalist and the landlord wrest the materials for their luxury from the starving lips and lacerated bodies of the poor. Here again I see resolution and hardness enough, but not altruism and nothing tolerable in Manoa.

But it is urged that the productiveness of industry in general will be so increased by this seasonable relief to one so important an industry that there will be no loss to the community,

though some individuals may suffer. Even if this were true, the objection still remains that the principle on which the subvention was granted is faulty. The appeal was not made to reason or even to sentiment, but to fear.

On this occasion it may have been the case that the subventionised industry was passing through a temporary emergency, which, if allowed to continue, would seriously embarrass industry in general, and that a temporary subvention would enable it permanently to tide over its difficulties. Thus the support given might be justifiable on the ground stated. But the community are not to judge. This year it is the miners. Next year it may be the sailors, or the distillers, or the cinema-operators. Force is to decide. When the nocturnal Rambler is confronted by a footpad, the point at issue is the relative physical strength of the demandant and the refuser, or perhaps the comparative merits of a bludgeon and of an umbrella as a weapon. The virtues or demerits of the tramp are irrelevant; but as a matter of fact the position is false. There is no evidence that the emergency is temporary. Unless that is the case, the granting of the subvention will not benefit industry in general. A capital sum of ten millions represents a perpetual

income of about five hundred thousand pounds. If this revenue does not pass into the pockets of the miner, it will remain in the pockets of others. If that income be wisely expended, it will fructify and produce more wealth. If it be wasted, it will perish. I do not suppose that the miners are any more industrious, frugal, and intelligent than the average taxpayer or the average citizen. The money is just as likely to be wasted by them as by those from whom it is directly or indirectly extorted, for their benefit, by the tax-gatherer. Money is but an order payable at sight on the community for the delivery of produce. If the consumption of those products leads to the production of products of an equal or greater value, then the community profits by the expenditure, but not otherwise. *A priori* it would appear rather that products applied to inducing a man to work at an unremunerative industry were in peril of being wasted. It is against this very thing—namely, the waste of products, whether by the uneconomic application of labour or by mere parasites—that Communism protests. The benefit therefore of this subvention is a benefit to the miners only, and not to the community. Its extortion therefore is a triumph for individualism, just as is the triumph of the cunning man who,

having the wit to buy up cheap some valuable site, charges afterwards the community an extortionate rent for its use. This is not Communism, and would not be tolerable in Manoa.

Looking at the question from a purely economic standpoint, it is certain that the subvention of an industry is inadmissible. If an industry is sound, it ought to pay reasonable wages of all kinds. If it is moribund, it should be allowed to die. It can only become moribund because its products do not command a remunerative price—that is to say, either because they are not wanted or because they can be supplied from elsewhere more efficiently. In both cases the granting of a subvention, the imposition of protective taxation, or whatever may be the form of the donative, is merely a waste of the general resources of the community by bribing labour to produce articles which are not wanted. This resembles the devices adopted at the end of the war, when machines were built in one shed and scrapped in another. Had this system been in vogue through the centuries, I suppose we should still be paying able-bodied men to make wicker-chariots, coracles, and indeed flint-axes. Certainly the handloom weavers would have been with us, and the misery of Spitalfields have been eternal. Not only does a moribund sub-

sidised industry cause positive waste, it causes it also indirectly by exposing viable industries to unfair competition. This can be seen clearly enough in the case of foreign products, for the complaints against "dumping" are universal. But in order to be dumped, products need not cross the frontier or even the county boundary.

Such are the purely economic objections to subvention, and they are incontestably sound. There is a sentimental argument no doubt in favour of subvention, and this is a strong argument. It is sad that men able and willing to work should be reduced to misery because, for no fault of their own, the industry from which they derive their living becomes moribund. But, in the first place, an industry is in far less danger of becoming moribund if all connected with it grasp that they must depend on their own efforts. In the second place, the beneficence of the community may be applied with far greater usefulness to alleviate the pains of inevitable indigence than to keeping up an artificial and mendacious prosperity. In the first case those who need help can be helped. In the latter case all alike, needy or wealthy, meritorious or culpable, share alike. Further, wisely directed beneficence is a bridge whereby the workless labourers can pass from a moribund trade to another and living trade

without undue suffering. Subvention keeps them in a state where ultimate destruction is certain. In the case of a subventionised industry the time will always come when the subvention cannot continue, and then there is sudden starvation. It is true that this question is not merely an economical question and that it cannot be decided on that ground alone, but that does not mean that the economics of the matter can be neglected altogether. In the case of the industry devoted to the production of home-grown food, the political expedience of protection, which was clear enough, was wholly disregarded on economic grounds.

These are the ordinary first-year doctrines of economy. The economics may be bourgeois economics, but the bourgeois desires above all things solvency; and grovelling as his materialism may be, and stuffy as may be the snug back-parlour, the insolvent idealist breathing the clear, fresh, January air in the great open spaces of God is not a very safe guide for those who have no desire to be starved or frozen. Suffering and anxious men are not expected to regard the rights of others and of the community. But that is the very thing against which Communism protests. In short, the State which grants a subvention to a particular industry is damnifying the community

for the benefit of individuals—that is, it is not taking all from all for all, but some from all for some. Such is not the policy of Manoa.

Such are the very obvious considerations that occur to him who observes this transaction merely as an isolated piece of ill-directed generosity, or the bestowal of a boon shamelessly impetrated and weakly conceded. But there are other considerations far more germane to my main purpose.

This is not an isolated transaction. The demand is put forward as the first step in the execution of a policy. That policy is directed in the first place to forcing the Government, as trustee of the community, to subsidise industry in general, and thereafter to nationalise certain industries. As regards the first part of the policy, it is not necessary to expatiate. The objections to subsidising industries have been stated, and they apply whether one industry or a thousand are subsidised. A viable industry should not need subsidy; a moribund industry should not be subsidised. The mischief, of course, is greater in proportion as the number of subsidised industries increase, and as a consequence more wealth, expended in hiring workmen to perform useless or noxious tasks, is deducted from the resources of the community.

But it is said that a general subsidy to key industries is Communistic, because it would lead to nationalisation of such industries, and hence to the vesting in the State of the means of production and distribution. This is, however, a fallacy. There is no room for half measures in Communism, which requires the sacrifice by all of all for all, and not merely the sacrifice by all of some for some. As long as any private property, whether in the form of tangible or intangible assets, is permitted to survive, so long will the individual attempt to shift off from his shoulders on to the shoulders of another individual, or of the community, as much of his own burden as he can, and so long will he attempt to reduce to the private possession of himself so much of the wealth of the community or of private individuals as he is allowed. If there is less to seize, less will be seized, but the appetite will remain.

But in Manoa there must be a sacrifice of egotism. If there are a few egotists in Manoa they must be discouraged. But in order that capitalist society, however limited be the extent over which it operates, may operate successfully, egotism and individualism must be encouraged.

Moreover, the intention of those who desire the nationalisation of the industries is not to



work harder and for less wages than they do now, though this might be necessary in the interests of the community. They desire nationalisation because they hope the conditions of their own life will be better—that is, that they will work less and for better wages. If the State and so the community also profits, so much the better; but that is not, except in tendentious writings, a motive which has any effect on those who are working for nationalisation. As it is perfectly certain that as things stand nationalisation of any industry must lead to a marked decline in its productiveness, the demand for nationalisation is simply a demand for subvention on a larger scale granted permanently out of communal funds—that is to say, it is a purely individualist demand, and has no sort of connection with real Communism. In Manoa the community is to assign the task, and each man is to receive according to his needs. In a semi-nationalised capitalist State the workman is to select his job, work at it as much as he feels inclined, and demand what wages he thinks he can get. The old higgling of the market is here again established. If his employer, the community, be a grudging employer, if it shows signs of doubting whether the workman is doing a fair day's work, or is not demanding an exces-

sive wage, the workman has not only the same power to strike against his employer which he now possesses, but he has also the power, as a voter, to compel the community to dismiss the old curmudgeonly managers and instal a new set, who will look on the aspirations of the workers with a more sympathetic eye. I imagine it would not be long before that body of expert nationalised workers, the army, might not try if there was not yet a third way of obtaining a satisfaction of reasonable demands from a grudging employer.

This very case of the army is continually quoted by those Communistic writers, who see in the partial nationalisation of industry a coming of the Communistic ideal. Is it then proposed to regiment labour? Is disobedience to be punished with death and slack work with ignominy? Are the workers to be submitted to the arbitrary will of their foremen and works-managers? I have seen no such proposals, and doubt if they would be popular. Nor do soldiers elect the Ministry of War. Nationalisation is therefore individualism *in excelsis*. It is a means whereby certain favoured workers will obtain maximum benefits for themselves in the first place, and perhaps in a few instances a few incidental benefits for the community, by laying a most grievous tax on

the whole body of citizens. Nationalisation is mere blackmail, and will always be so as long as there is any one to blackmail—that is, as long as the State, master of the fortunes, is not the absolute master of the lives of the whole community. I do not therefore see that the prospect of nationalisation is peculiarly calculated to reconcile the thinking man to the transaction under consideration.

People have a general sort of idea that State management is ineffective. This is based usually on hasty generalisations drawn from the experience of the observer with the working of the telephone. Few people, however, have any idea of how extraordinarily great is the inefficiency of State management as compared to reasonably sound private management till he has studied concrete instances. Such abound. And these instances merely indicate the difference between the productiveness of a business in actual progress under private as compared with the same business under State management. It makes no allowance for red-tape, and the strangling effects of bureaucracy, and the absence of competition on meliorative energies. Had the means of transport always been the exclusive property of the State, we should have had to wait a very long time for steamships and railways. It is at present on

competition, and the fear of being left behind in the race, that we depend for the application for inventions and new processes to industry, but there can be no competition where there are no competitors. On the whole, then, nationalisation is not at present to be approved in cases where it is possible to use private management.

It would appear to me, therefore, that this experiment is not to be approved either on Communistic, Socialistic, or economic grounds. But if that were all, this discussion would have no place in the present book. It would be of interest to myself at any rate to go further and look into the circumstances connected with this donative rather more deeply, because it seems to me that we may here discern one of the methods by which impatient idealism, in its haste to reconstruct society, may actually damage if not destroy it.

The grant of the donative was compelled by a menace, and by a menace held out not only by the industry affected but by other powerful industries.

The actual menace was one of a general strike, the favourite threat of the subversives. It is not a very serious menace in fact. It is supposed to be directed by the "proletarians"—that is, by those who have no visible reserves

—against the “ bourgeois ”—that is, the classes possessed of some reserves. It is thus the warfare of a man armed with a bow against a man armed with a rifle. The man who has resources and reserves is in a better position to hold out against cold and hunger than the man who starts at zero. For though nominally the assault is one to be directed against the propertied classes, it is actually directed against all the inhabitants of the area in which the strike operates, proletarians as well as bourgeois, for all are consumers. If the propertied classes hold out, the menace of a general strike is a mere bogey, because, given equal tenacity, the proletarians must give way first or die. As far as the actual menace goes, therefore, it is not one which should alarm the community or the Government, which is the trustee of the community. It is, of course, possible that the possessing classes may be so base and dastardly that they will not undergo discomfort and peril in the interests of the community to protect it against individualistic rapine. If that is actually the case in England—that is, if defeatism and materialism are really so strongly lodged in our national temples and cannot be cast out even by fire—then it is high time that so foul a society did perish in the flames of revolution. There is no doubt

a grave peril in the general strike. I shall discuss that later. Here I wish to point out that while he who extorts money by threats is very culpable, yet that he who yields to those threats is in a way as culpable. It is certain that if every person threatened with blackmail were to ring the bell and send for a police-officer many flourishing businesses would have to close down. The payment of Danegeld does not really save the State. It merely summons the black ships from every quarter. Is it supposed that the appetite of the miners will be glutted by this banquet, or will not speedily revive? Are there no other esurient industries? Are these to sit by and see one pampered while they are famishing? Is it wise to attach a reward to the commission of acts ill-befitting a citizen? Is that cultural administration?

These and the preceding considerations were no doubt present to the minds of the Government. That Government, though its energy is hampered by the difficulties attaching to all Parliamentary Governments in the present age, is yet a wise and strong Government, and its head is distinguished by calm common-sense and business ability. It might be that such a Government was so convinced of the danger of defeatism (as I think some recent Govern-

ments have been convinced) that, like a crusader at the head of a mob of camp-followers, it felt resistance would be mere futility. But this Government was put in office by an electorate tired of defeatism. There is at least therefore the probability that a vigorous resistance (justified as many of the members of the present Government could have justified it clearly and eloquently on the grounds of sound policy) would have been as vigorously supported by the electors. It seems to me therefore that the Government must have been driven to this surrender by the fear of a peril, implicit indeed in the threat of the general strike, which is, however, not merely that of the success of the general strike.

For, indeed, the general strike is a dangerous weapon in the hands of the true subversive, because, win or lose, it must serve his purposes. The *désire* of the subversive is to destroy society as it exists and to build anew, not to reconstruct it by any process of evolution. For the destruction of society a general strike or a series of general strikes would be indeed a most potent lever. Apart from the loss of wealth which it must necessarily cause, whether by mere cessation of labour or by actual destruction of fixed capital by starving men, and apart from the intensification of suffering

amongst the vast majority of the "proletarians" which must necessarily follow any such gigantic struggle, the subversive looks forward as the principal effect of a general strike to an embitterment of class feeling. That a general strike, whether successful or unsuccessful, would equally embitter class hatred is certain. The very use, necessarily in this connection, of those abominable words proletarian and bourgeois indicates this. They are labels, and insulting labels, whereby Englishman is marked off from Englishman. The object of the subversives is that these should become the names of fixed parties continually at war in all industrialised countries, so that the proletarian of England regards as his true brother the proletarian of France, and the bourgeois of England as his irreconcilable enemy. To effect this purpose a civil war is a good means, particularly a civil war which cannot end in compromise, but must press on to total excision. In such a war it matters not in the least who is the victor, or who is the vanquished in any particular campaign. The victor pent up in the confines of the same city with his vanquished enemy will, in his day of power, be that worst of oppressors, a frightened oppressor. The vanquished, seeing everywhere the emblems of a victory won over him and



his party, and continually paying the penalties of defeat, will ever be humiliated, and will thirst for one thing only—namely, for the day of revenge. A society where these feelings prevail is not a true society, and ever striving to suppress the disruptive principles which, existing in all organisations, are in healthy organisations well controlled, cannot hope to march towards better things, for its vital energies applied to mere self-preservation leave no balance which can help it to progress. This is the danger of the general strike. It is this danger that, perhaps wisely, the Government refused to face.

But the duty of a government as the trustee of the community is not merely to perceive a danger and to yield to it. It may be necessary to pay Danegeld in order to stave off a great and unforeseen danger, but it is only an Ethelred who relies on present surrender to avoid future calamities. An Alfred may pay ransom, but he builds ships and organises the militia. It is the duty of the Government to provide against a great danger that threatens the community. They can do so if they wish. They have the power and they have the mandate. If they cannot or will not do so, no one can. This is not a matter for a faction. It concerns England, but if it must be done by a faction,

it is not the moribund Liberal party, the by-product itself of revolt; it is not the official Labour party, the impotent and reluctant mandatories of the enemy, who can save the republic. The danger is perfectly obvious; the means by which it can be obviated are also patent. If the peril is not now faced and dissipated, the chances are that it is under the banner now unfurled that subversivism will make its final effort to destroy our society. That effort may well be successful.



XI.

DANGER



## XI.

### DANGER.

THE peril with which our present society is at the moment menaced is the assumption by the Trade Unions of a power inconsistent with the legitimate authority now entrusted to the State. That power may come into conflict with the power of the State. That conflict will be a class conflict. Its consequence may well be the total eversion of the State, and it must, whoever be the victor, inflict deadly injuries on both combatants.

Economists, I believe, differ whether the legitimate efforts made by the unions since their legalisation have really produced much effect on the prosperity of labour in general. My own belief is that they have. But even if they had not, it is clear that the unions fulfil a very useful function, not only as providing their members with material assistance, but also as bestowing on the labourer that sense of security, dignity, and responsibility

which an isolated individual, or an individual who is but an insignificant unit in a vast corporation like the State, must necessarily lack. Theologians also differ as to the exact utility of a Church; but there is no doubt that a member of a living Church in most cases is a better Christian than the self-styled mystic. The legitimate union is therefore one of the supports of society. It is so, not only because anything that makes the citizen a better man must also make him a better citizen, and therefore a support to the State (which if it is not a nursery of virtue is nothing); but also because many of the unions, being in their quasi-corporate capacity owners of considerable funds, were not in the least inclined to subversivism. These legitimate unions did no doubt commit many mistakes, but they did protect the workman against the ignorance, violence, and rapacity of certain employers, and they enabled fair bargains to be struck and enforced between parties whose abilities to contract, nominally equal, were actually most unequal. It is ill-bargaining between a full man and a fasting.

Combinations in restraint of trade are, however, by common law illegal. The peculiar English law as to conspiracy makes illegal also the commission by a number of persons, working for a common unlawful end, acts which,

if committed by one person or by a number acting independently, would be not criminal. Thus though it was open to one workman, or to a number of individual workmen, to leave their master's employment if they thought they could get better terms elsewhere, yet it was criminal for a number of workmen to band together to bring pressure on their master by threatening to leave his employment simultaneously. These laws were not in name directed against Trade Unionists alone. The laws as to conspiracy are universal, and those as to combination are applicable to all persons who have things to sell, whether labour or commodities. In practice, however, it was with particular hardship that these regulations weighed on the labourers. A change in the law was therefore introduced, and unions were given a legal status. But the legislators of 1871 to 1876 regarded unions as necessary evils, and the legislation was somewhat of a makeshift, and based on no very ascertainable principles. As little recognition as possible is given to the union, and the legislation is addressed rather to controlling and privileging the individual workman considered as a member of a union than to controlling and privileging the union itself. In some respects the union is made a corporation, and as such subject



to slight control; in other respects it is a voluntary meeting of good citizens for laudable purposes; in others it is a tolerated conspiracy. The union has never in the eye of the law become a legal person capable of suing and being sued, capable of being indicted for a misdemeanour, the legality of whose acts can be tested either by *quo warranto* or any similar proceeding at the instance of the public, or a suit for declaration or injunction by a private individual, whether a member of the union or not. Not being a person, it could have no legal agents, and wrongs committed by its actual agents gave the person wronged no recourse against the property of the union for damages. It could enter into no contracts, and could not therefore stand surety for the good behaviour of its members.

For some time it was the law that a union could be sued in damages for the wrongs committed by its agents at its direction or under its authority; but by the command of the Legislature this liability was rescinded, and the union remained, as it is now, still in great measure outside the law. As regards the relief of the unions from the liability imposed by judicial decisions, it is to be said that vast and unforeseen changes in the privileges of the citizen ought not to be effected by "a change

in the wording of General Order XVI.," but are to be introduced, if at all, after full and free discussion culminating in an Act of the Legislature. In that light the Trades Disputes Act might be well enough, but the result was that the unions were merely replaced in their old position of extra-legality, where they still remain.

This was, in my opinion, an error in administration. The unions being really and truly corporations ought to be created bodies politic, and subject as such to whatever law may be thought applicable to such bodies, which need not necessarily be the law applicable to private individuals. That law, as it conferred rights, would also impose restrictions. Creatures possessed of great wealth and commanding great man-power, if put outside the law, may be tempted to override the law. Society is full of *personæ fictæ*, colleges, chapters, chartered companies, statutory companies, learned societies, the Church itself, the very Crown, all equally protected and restrained by the law of the land. The unions are the only exceptions.

So long as the unions confined themselves to protecting the interests of their own members in respect of local disputes as to wages and other terms of employment, the position,

though illogical and inconvenient, was endurable. Matters, however, did not stop at that point. The unions became permeated with Socialism. This was but natural. The union seeks in the first place to benefit its own members—that is to say, it is a highly individualistic institution, as it should be,—and Socialism, though masquerading as Communism, is indeed nothing of the kind, but either a means of extorting from the community an undue share of wealth for some particular individuals, or a sop thrown by the propertied classes, to the disinherited. This Socialism was found in the permanent officials of the larger unions, and in the intellectuals who soon attached themselves to these institutions, though it was neither understood nor admired by the rank and file. The Socialism found in the directorate of some of the Trade Unions was of all shades, ranging from a somewhat arid professorial Socialism to something like enthusiastic Communism. But whatever its nature, it always taught this doctrine at least: that the mass is different in nature from the unit, and far more powerful. It taught, therefore, that any particular trade dispute was not the concern of the actual disputants only. Labour in general was interested in the victory or defeat of any particular set of workmen. It taught

also that it was not so much by putting pressure on the individual employer that permanent benefits and permanent security could be won for the members of the unions, but by putting pressure on society in general, and especially on the Government or local bodies. Thus Trade Unionism entered politics.

From this it followed that there was a movement for the aggregation of isolated unions into larger bodies. The unions did not now always consist of bodies of men employed in any particular factory, or even in all the factories in any small local area. In the case of some trades there was first a federation and then sometimes an amalgamation of many scattered unions into one organisation, covering the whole country or some large area. This was neither an unmixed evil nor an unmixed good. In so far as it strengthened the unions in the exercise of their legitimate powers, it was legitimate and useful. It also made them richer, and therefore less inclined to subversivism. The knowledge that oppressive treatment of one workman would be resented by all the men of the same trade through a large area made employers more careful. The knowledge that a strike ordered in one factory might spread over the whole country made unions more careful not to provoke a conflict except when

this was truly necessary. Moreover, as the management of these large bodies needed the services of men of education and executive ability, many of the rather sinister phenomena of earlier Trade Unionism, due to the ignorance of the directors of the small unions, disappeared. On the other hand, the management and direction of these large aggregations passed rapidly beyond the control of the mass of the members, and it was always possible that the new leaders and the permanent officials might use the power of the unions (power which was by the nature of the case absolutely at their disposal) for purposes not really connected with the true objects of these bodies. But in any case it became obvious that a new power had come into existence, and those who commanded, or who hoped to command, the use of that power, whether for legitimate or illegitimate ends, naturally desired to increase it. The movement for federation and amalgamation grew, and is growing. The hope was that if all the skilled labourers in any particular trade in the country constituted one union, or a federation of unions under one directorate, that union or federation would have a monopoly of that particular kind of skill; and if it could retain that monopoly, it could sell the labour of its members at the highest possible price.

In the same way a federation of corn importers might well produce an artificial famine in the country, and then sell its stocks at a huge profit. In the same way the landlord can exact what he pleases for the use of a piece of land, provided that on that land and nowhere else some indispensable building must be erected.

From this to an understanding between the various great unions or federation of unions was but a short step. Even the most powerful union may find itself in difficulties if it enters into a conflict with a powerful and well-organised body of employers. In that case it must needs ask for assistance from its friends and sympathisers—that is, from other unions not directly interested in the actual cause of conflict but indirectly interested,—because they knew that when your neighbour's house is burning it is well in your own interests to assist him. Therefore some of the greater unions entered into formal alliance for joint action with other unions, and there was, even where there was no formal alliance, a growth of the sense of the “solidarity of labour.” There were not lacking persons who dreamed of a federation of all the unions, at first perhaps in any given State, but ultimately throughout the industrialised countries. It could not but be that

so mighty a power would make itself felt not only in the economic but also in the political region.

I am not a great admirer of that invention of modern politics, the caucus or political machine, but it is, I think, indispensable in a democracy. It is not wholly desirable that millions of voters should vote not as they think but as they are told. This is true, however worthy and competent their leaders may be and however truly representative they are of the mass. Still the thing is there, and is not likely to be removed at present. It would be unreasonable therefore to blame the persons responsible because they said: "We can only assure our prosperity and security by putting pressure on Government. That pressure can be best applied by means of the ballot-box. Let us proceed to guide and instruct the elector. The unions exist, and they can quite easily be turned into political machines. All that is necessary is that the most influential persons in each union should agree on a common policy (a common platform it is called), recommend that to their members, and see that their members vote accordingly."

Such was, then, the policy of those who directed certain of the Trades Unions. They met together in an informal council, agreed

on a policy, and then, by promising the support of the local voters who were also members of unions, received in return promises of support from the candidates of one or other of the great political parties. The influence of the machine was, however, at first not very great, as there was not an overwhelming number of Trades Unionists who were also electors. At first, therefore, socialised Labour supported one or the other of the old rotative parties. As, however, the number of electors who were sympathetic with Labour increased, either by the rallying to the new party of Liberals dissatisfied with Liberalism, which in its individualistic form was rapidly dying, and who found in the gospel of Labour much that was congruous with their ideals, or by the continual lowering of the suffrage, a separate Labour party came into existence, and is now with us. In so far as this party was a political party and desired to come to its ends by political means and under the forms of the constitution, no reasonable citizen can regard it as a danger, though it is permissible to disagree with its doctrines as not beneficial to the State, and to disapprove of the method by which its policy is adopted and enforced. There are many machines operating in the democracy. The optimistic democrat thinks that the result of



the struggle of all these particularist interests will enure for the benefit of the community. That may or may not be the case, but the use of the electoral power lawfully conferred and lawfully applied is not revolutionary, and cannot by itself destroy society. Those who disapprove of the politics of the official Labour party should not bellow "Revolution," and perceive the Bolsho in the concealed bourgeois; they should themselves devise stronger and better machines which will lead the voter into the paths that they wish him to follow. If they fail to do so, and if the policy of official Labour prevails and that leads indirectly and ultimately to the destruction of the State (which does not seem to me very likely), everything will have been done in a legal and parliamentary way (as Pym might have said), and no one will have any reason to complain. The Revolution, if it comes then, will be revolution engineered by the propertied classes.

But things are now moving beyond that point. The impatient idealist, dissatisfied (as he may well be) with the ballot-box and the lobby and the political tea-party as means of realising Manoa, is thinking that it would be possible to use the man-power of the unions to put pressure on the Government directly, just as the Government of one State puts

pressure on the Government of another State. These persons wish to remove whatsoever they are pleased to call Labour questions from the field of internal politics to that of diplomacy, and diplomacy has no power if it has not the power of the sword. Thus political questions are to be debated not at the hustings, not in Parliament, but under the shadow of battle. The threat is used that if such and such measures are not accepted, the State and all the citizens will be exposed to the great inconvenience and grave danger of a general strike. In this way a large and well-disciplined minority hopes to impose its will on the badly organised majority, not by gaining converts but by mere terror. The present menace was nominally applied to a dispute about wages and hours, but there is no reason why it should be applied only in such cases. Any political aim which might commend itself to those who control the unions might be enforced in the same way. In fact, the only successful general strike which I at present remember was the strike organised by the Belgian Liberals for the purpose of forcing the Government of that country to introduce universal suffrage. Any matter of internal or foreign relations might be decided in this way. If this is tolerated, power must rapidly migrate from King, Lords,

and Commons to the directors of organised Labour.

But this is not all. There are a few persons who hope to use the general strike not for the purpose of forcing the Government to do this or omit that, they hope under that pretext to subvert society. They think that some acute difference of opinion might arise between the Government and the proletarians, that in that quarrel the latter might be induced to threaten a general strike, that the Government might hold firm, and the strike actually take place. The consequent distress, they suppose, will be so great that an armed rising might follow, causing the subversion of the Government. The leaders of the workmen would then assume the position of executive chiefs of the community, and could remodel society as they pleased. Something like this was what occurred in Paris in the days of the second Republic, and again before the installation of the third. The same was in effect the course of the recent Russian Revolution. I am of the opinion that it would not be possible at present to subvert the Government by the armed force of workmen, however distressed and exasperated, but any considerable bloodshed would leave behind it that bitterness of class feeling which renders the coming of the

Revolution in time more probable, and is therefore desired by the subversives.

It is true that impatient idealists and subversives are few in numbers. The vast mass of the actual labourers have no love for subversivism, are not acquainted with the theories of Communism, and are Socialistic in so far only as Socialism promises to them personally better conditions of existence. Nor are the official Socialists over-enthusiastic about those who wish to realise Manoa in a hurry, whether such realisation is to be by war against or by subversion of the State. They are, after all, bourgeois in intellect and affinity, and it is against the bourgeois that the revolt of the proletarian is directed.

Still these extremists cannot be neglected wholly on account of the insignificance of their number. That is the mistake all constituted authorities make. I believe the beginning of Czecho-Slovakia was the meeting in a certain room at Prague of five men. How many—I do not say Jacobins but Republicans—were there in the National Assembly? How many in Paris? How many in France?

It seems to me that it is contrary to the experience of centuries to allow any persons, whether real or fictitious, to set themselves above the law and to seek to attain political

ends by diplomatic methods—that is, by the menace of war. No modern State tolerates that sort of realm within a realm, nor did the English State in its best days. Privileged persons, great nobles, robber barons, Holy Church, the Covenanted Kirk, the Crown itself—many great powers came forth to battle with the State and have succumbed. That two supreme authorities in one State cannot exist is now a mere truism in politics. None of the well-ordered Governments, whether of the old or the new world, permit to these irregular colleges and *comices* so much liberty that they can hope to overtop the civil power. This restriction has nothing to do with the form of the Government. In fact the more democratic are the institutions and instincts of a country, the more jealous it is of extra-legal combinations of the citizens. Nor is this unreasonable. If these federations of private citizens are necessary in order that their members may secure justice, then there is something very wrong with the institutions of the State. Under a weak tyranny, under a weak oligarchy, there may be some excuse for citizens who band themselves into a body politic to confront oppression, but in a democracy all citizens have the power to impose their will on the Government by constitutional means, and it is

the duty of the citizen to secure good government, not by opposing and crippling the State, but by supporting it and guiding its rulers. That is the veritable faith of democracy. It is that faith which justifies it. It is therefore that the true subversive has in his heart a hatred and scorn of democracy.

The matter has now come to a distinct issue between the people of England and the Trade Unions. It cannot but be that the present success of the miners will give to revolutionary or subversive Communism good heart and courage, and that a policy of blackmail, long regarded with distaste and mistrust, will now have the prestige of success. With true Trade Unionism the British people as such have no concern, with political Trade Unionism they cannot without grave inconvenience interfere; but they have a very vital interest in subversive Trade Unionism, and they must tame it or lose their liberty. It may be that the British people is so rotten with defeatism that it will crouch at the feet of any master; but if it is still sound, it will in time find a leader. That leader will be set a heavy task, but this task can be done, and if it is done, no leader will have merited more from his country. It is no slight thing to save the liberties of the republic, to spare the effusion of kindred blood,

to reanimate the energies of a failing nation : Englishmen have died, and very gladly, for the least of these. All this can be wrought by him who will have courage. But if there be delay and faint-heartedness and lack of clear vision, the favourable moment may pass, and the struggle, now certainly inevitable, will come at some unpropitious hour, some hour of deadly peril. In that case in the most favourable event there will be left to the victors memories of the most abominable of wars and the most hateful of peaces, in the worst event there will be no memories.

XII.

THE END





## XII.

### THE END.

To sum up, Society, as at present constituted, is oppressive, unjust, and wasteful. As far as can be judged, evolutionary processes are not leading to betterment. Many persons are thus discontented. Palliatives have been applied, but these do not really cure the evil. Into this society has come the Idea of Communism, which does promise a healing reformation; but this Idea cannot realise itself by mechanical means. It must realise itself, if at all, by means of a gradual change in the character of Man. Therefore the reformation must be a slow process, and the ills of society are pressing for a cure. Thus among impatient idealists there is a hope that remedies may be applied by revolution. This is an error, and revolutionary teaching is merely aggravating the ills from which we are now suffering, and thus removing still further the possibility of the realisation of the Communistic idea. Hence *a priori* it

would appear that a revolution was probable. The State or community is not at present very well organised to resist the impact of revolution, because the community is permeated with ideas which render the maintenance of legal and established order difficult. Therefore there is at least the possibility of a revolution, which must as things stand be wholly noxious. At present and at this moment the danger is from the illicit power of the Trade Unions, but if that peril pass, the original danger will still persist. I have not taken on myself to ascertain whether that danger is really yet formidable, and if so what are the proper measures to avert it. That would be impertinent in an exile. It is for those who love their country, whatever kind of coats they may wear or whatever be their political label, to discover and apply the remedy. But in times of revolution the wisdom of the wise is turned into folly, for it is hard to contend against ghostly foes.

I have every sympathy with the lady who, whenever a housemaid is impertinent, perceives the working of the Hidden Hand, and prepares to play the part of heroine in the sensational drama of "Injured Innocence or the Bolsho under the Bed." Similarly I have every sympathy with those who say: "What has hap-

pened will always happen, and what has not happened will never happen. Other societies may perish, but not ours. Never has there been a revolution in England, and consequently there never will be one." But neither are very wise. A revolution will happen here as elsewhere if the necessary antecedents come into existence and not otherwise. It is allowed to any one to deny that antecedent causes strong enough to lead to a violent explosion now exist. He cannot assert with truth that they never will exist. He may also say that even if they do exist, their destructive energies may by statesmanship and civic ability be turned elsewhere. He may not assert that in defect of these qualities the luck of the British people will inevitably carry them through.

One may make a parable. England was at war with a mighty confederation. Her ships were wholly swept from the sea. Food, now declared contraband, failed, and she was forced humbly, in suppliant wise, to pray and beseech the victor for mercy. The Allies, thinking that there was an excessive number of Englishmen in the world, and that the continuance of the "Northern Menace" was not desirable, while admitting in principle the blessings of reconciliation, in fact would not conclude negotiations. In the meanwhile they kept up a strict

blockade, as the Allies did against Germany between the Armistice and the definitive peace. There would no doubt be indignation meetings in Trafalgar Square and elsewhere denouncing the inhumanity of the enemy, and able articles would be written by the thousand conclusively showing how very unchristian, unchivalrous, illiberal, and damnatory to the genuine interests of the Allies was this unsympathetic behaviour. But all that would not render it any less certain that the population of England would have straightway to reduce itself to that number which could be fed by the products of English soil and seas—that is, I suppose, to about a half of its present number. Unless, then, the inhabitants entered into a federation of mutual consumption leagues, each with its communal ballot-box, butcher, kitchen, and cook, or unless the suicide club became one of our cherished national institutions, I do not see how the necessary reduction could be effected in the time permitted except by revolution and by a massacre of those who had the foodstuffs and were not strong enough to retain them against the violence of the State or of the starving masses. Such a finale to Britain may seem improbable. It is clearly not impossible. It may seem equally improbable that, owing to some of the causes dealt with in the pre-

ceding chapters, there might be such a sudden collapse of production and of exchange as would lead to similar conditions, and so to similar results, but it is clearly not impossible. What would have happened in Ireland in 1846 if it had not been for the armed might of the propertied classes and the revenue of the Empire ?

England is not under the protection of any special God. The God of Revelation bids you reap as you have sown. The God of Nature shows no more concern for an overturned Empire than for an overturned ant-heap. To me it seems that if any such fantastic catastrophe did occur, the calm student of history in after-years would rather wonder why it had not happened earlier than why it had happened. "England," he would say, "in these ages was in effect an urban community. Yet it had not, as a city should have, a fertile territory at its doors whence it could be certain of obtaining the means of life. Any long interruption of free exchange between city and territory must lead to a reduction in the population of the city. That interruption might be caused in many ways. It might, for example, be caused by a violent breach of communications, or by devastation of the supplying area, or by cessation of production of exchangeable com-

modities within the walls of the city, or by mere refusal of the territory to supply on any terms. The extent to which the progress of depopulation must proceed will depend on the degree of completeness and the duration of the system of isolation. In this case it was impossible for human wisdom to foresee everything and to guard against everything. The unforeseen occurred, and the city perished. Such is the ultimate fate of all communities which are not self-supporting."

Fifty, five hundred, five thousand years hence—but sometime England will again be a self-supporting community as it was one hundred and fifty years ago. Increased productiveness, due to the application of science to agriculture, may substantially increase the supply of that part of the bread of the British people which is not dependent on the wind and waves, but can never alone suffice to feed our present population. The agricultural population will no doubt increase, but the large majority of the town-dwellers must perish. If the process of reduction be applied too quickly, there will be an armed revolution; if the process be a gradual process, the suffering which must inevitably result may be spread out over centuries. But even in the latter more favourable case it will need wise and firm statesmanship

so to control and attenuate the wretchedness, that the process of eliminating the superfluous may be one of evolution and not of revolution.

There have been many instances in history where a redundant population has died off without much remonstrance. Italy in the sixth and seventh centuries, and again in the seventeenth and eighteenth, is a familiar example. But the people are now not so patient as they were. Man thinks he has rights, and will fight for them and perish, if he must, as a wolf perishes surrounded by hounds, and not as a sheep before the butcher. Nor are those lacking who preach that all can be won by violence, nor are leaders lacking.

It may be therefore that this idea of Communism will be a guiding angel, and that it will lead Man by the paths of evolution to some distant Manoa. It may be a mocking spirit sent to lead him through mire and quicksands, through peril and ignominy back to his point of departure. It may again be an angel of wrath sent for the destruction of our civilisation. A great drama is opening before us. It would be interesting to watch the show from overture to curtain, for thus only could one see whether it was a comedy (divine or otherwise), a tragedy, or a farce, but that is not permitted. The messenger is at hand who



will call me from the light and warmth of the gay and crowded theatre into the cold and rain of the streets, and thence to ultimate darkness. But as for those who remain, let them remember that a show is but a show, and that they are not compelled to appear on the stage.

In the palmy days of the Roman State, when the people in centuriate assembly was about to express its will, the voters were gathered in certain pens. From these pens each in his turn passed along a certain bridge or raised gangway, at the farther end of which he recorded his vote, and was thus, while performing this duty of a citizen, in full view of his fellows. When the question for decision was peace or war, it was the practice of the younger men to clamour that the old men should be flung down from the bridge before they could vote. It was unjust, they thought, that they, the young men, should be sent to slaughter at the command of the aged, who by the laws were exempt from the levy. In civil warfare it is not the case that the aged are spared; indeed, on the rostra the heads which are displayed are more often grey and the hands veined and skinny. It is not unjust therefore that the aged should mix in civil politics, but it is perhaps at this crisis rather inexpedient.

This is an epoch when we need before all

things hope and energy and idealism and the will to live, but the aged have none of these things. It would be well therefore if they would stand aside from the administration of things and give the young their chance. There is on the side of subversion hope, energy, idealism, and will. If all that encounters, as adversaries hope, energy, idealism, and will, then there is the chance of some new thing fit to be loved coming out of the clash. But if all that meet defeatism, lassitude, materialism, and soulless force, then there will be only either a shameful defeat or a shameful victory.

What there is of value in Fascismo is this very thing—namely, that it was the spontaneous answer of youth to a challenge, a clear gesture of defiance to an insolent threat. The voice of Fascismo is the battle-song of generous youth going out to war on no doubtful issue, and it proclaims that there is courage in the youth of Italy; and that if there is any blessing on courage, then Italy shall live and not die. But let those who have chosen for their symbol the rods and axes remember that these are types of justice.

As a political organisation there is no place for Fascismo in England. The institutions of the realm are still sound or can be restored. The will of the true people can express itself

in lawful fashion, and there is no need of extra-legal violence. Just as it is an ill-omen that the Trade Unions should constitute themselves a body politic within the State but hostile to it, so it would be a matter of ill-omen that patriotic youth should constitute itself into a similar body politic; for that would be to indicate that it also despaired of the republic. But it is not despair that we need; it is hope, and that youth can alone supply.

But there is a wide interval between despair of the republic and blind confidence in existing institutions; and if I cared much for these things I should be glad to see a League of Youth banded together to resist not Communism but subversivism, to aid and encourage the State when it was necessary, to resist illegal violence, to unite together the members, not of this class or the other, but all those who love the common thing better than their own interests, to secure that change shall be evolutionary and not revolutionary, to substitute the spirit of loyal co-operation for that arrogance and malice which makes up class hatred, to protect, not this institution or that, but the sum which is England. This city of Ascalon is a strong city. It is strong in the strength of its walls, the greatness of its revenues, and the might of its armies. Those are material things, and

against foes of the flesh those things may well avail. But against ghostly foes walls and wealth and mercenary armies are as stubble. Idea must be met with idea, and faith set against faith. Let those, then, that have faith band themselves together, not against the defenders of the city, but in their support. It is the duty of the commandant of the garrison to accumulate from every quarter the material means of defence, and so to use them that the city may not fall. But he is impotent to call on spiritual auxiliaries. These obey no mobilisation order. These must step forward eagerly as volunteers; they cannot be impressed. It is for the young, for such as have faith, to show their faith that the enemy may falter and the defenders be in good heart. Thus the spiritual city must remain unvanquished. For if the spiritual city capitulate with a base capitulation, it matters not whether the walls and bastions of stone and earthwork endure or perish.

I once knew an amiable old subversive whose two chief desires were to live in harmony with his environment and to drink the blood of the whites. I forget for the moment how he reconciled these aims one with another. His argument was, I think, that the presence of the whites rendered his environment so

disagreeable that it was impossible for him to live in harmony with it, but this is not very material. I asked him (this was long before the days of the new "angle of vision") whether he did not think he and his friends had undertaken a task which was rather beyond his powers, whether, in short, the power of the Franks was not to be broken? He said: "The same thought once occurred to me. I was standing at the Charing Cross end of Trafalgar Square looking northward. The traffic was a mighty and menacing flood impelled by certain and obscure forces. To my left were the palaces of the Kings and the quarters of the powerful, of the wealthy, and of the adorners of the kingdom. Before me rose the Column of Victories. To my right my spirit passed along that street whence the thought of the Franks speaks to all men on to the City, the treasure-house and tribute-chamber of the whole world. Behind me were the memorials of the leaders of old days, generation after generation, and the apparatus of Kingly sway, and those council chambers where a word spoken may take flesh and save or kill. Then my heart sunk within me, for I thought that the cold and ordered dominion of the Franks was established for ever. But at that very instant I was given eyes to see the truth. These mighty crowds,

what are they ? Temporary aggregates of fortuitous units. There is an appearance of entity and corporate will, but this is but an illusion. Every individual is moved actually by his own volition, and passes on his own errand. Ere long the mass will be dissolved into its units, and will be no more existent ; so, too, of the buildings. Motionless apparently, and each forming a solid and immutable mass not to be shaken, they are in truth not so, being but the resultants of mutually contending forces. There stress is eternally striving with stress and strain with strain. The arch is for ever complaining of the tyranny of its load, and the wall of the thrust of the buttress. These things therefore are not immortal : they are but the combination of atoms held together for a time by movements imparted from without, just as the body of man is preserved for a time by the harmonious dance of the atoms ; but that existence which is based on movement is impermanent. A few hours and these crowds will be no more ; a few years and all these men will be dust ; a few decades and the buildings will have crumbled into ruin ; a few centuries and this kingdom will have passed."

Thus said my old friend. I did not quite accept his metaphysics, but I understood him in part, and I went away marvelling at his

lack of discernment, in that he did not perceive that just as that against which he was fighting was but an illusory dance of atoms, so also that for which he was fighting—namely, his own idols—were themselves also no more than a dream and the shadow of a dream.

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